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ABSTRACT

This book, containing the papers presented at a conference concerning the French contributions to the Upper Midwest region of the United States, includes: (1) "Contact and Consequence: An Introduction to Over 300 Years of French Presence in the Northwest" (V. Benoit); (2) "The French Voyageur and the Fur Trade" (J. T. Rivard); (3) "The Assimilation and Acculturation of French Canadians" (E. E. Gagne); (4) "History of Our Lady of Lourdes Church" (A. W. Moss); (5) "The Enhanced Economic Position of Women in French Colonial Illinois" (W. Briggs); (6) "Silkville: Fourierism on the Kansas Prairies" (L. D. Harris); (7) "The Structures of Everyday Life in a French Utopian Settlement in Iowa: The Case of the Icarians of Adams County, 1853-1898" (A. Prevos); (8) "France and America: A Minnesota Artist's Experience" (R. N. Coen); (9) "The Mute Heritage: Perspective on the French of America" (A. Renaud); (10) "French Presence in the Red River Valley, Part I: A History of the Metis to 1870" (V. Benoit); (11) "The Michif Language" (J. Crawford); (12) "A Brief History of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians" (D. de Montigny); (13) "Finding Your French-Canadian Roots: A Brief Guide" (W. Pope); and (14) "Les Voyageurs: A French Language Village Experience" (C. Schulze). A paper, "The 60th Anniversary of the Trans-Atlantic Flight of Charles A. Lindbergh" (J. A. Schiff), is also included because of Lindbergh's Minnesota roots and the role the U.S. and France played in his historic flight. Photographs, drawings, and maps are provided. (JHP)

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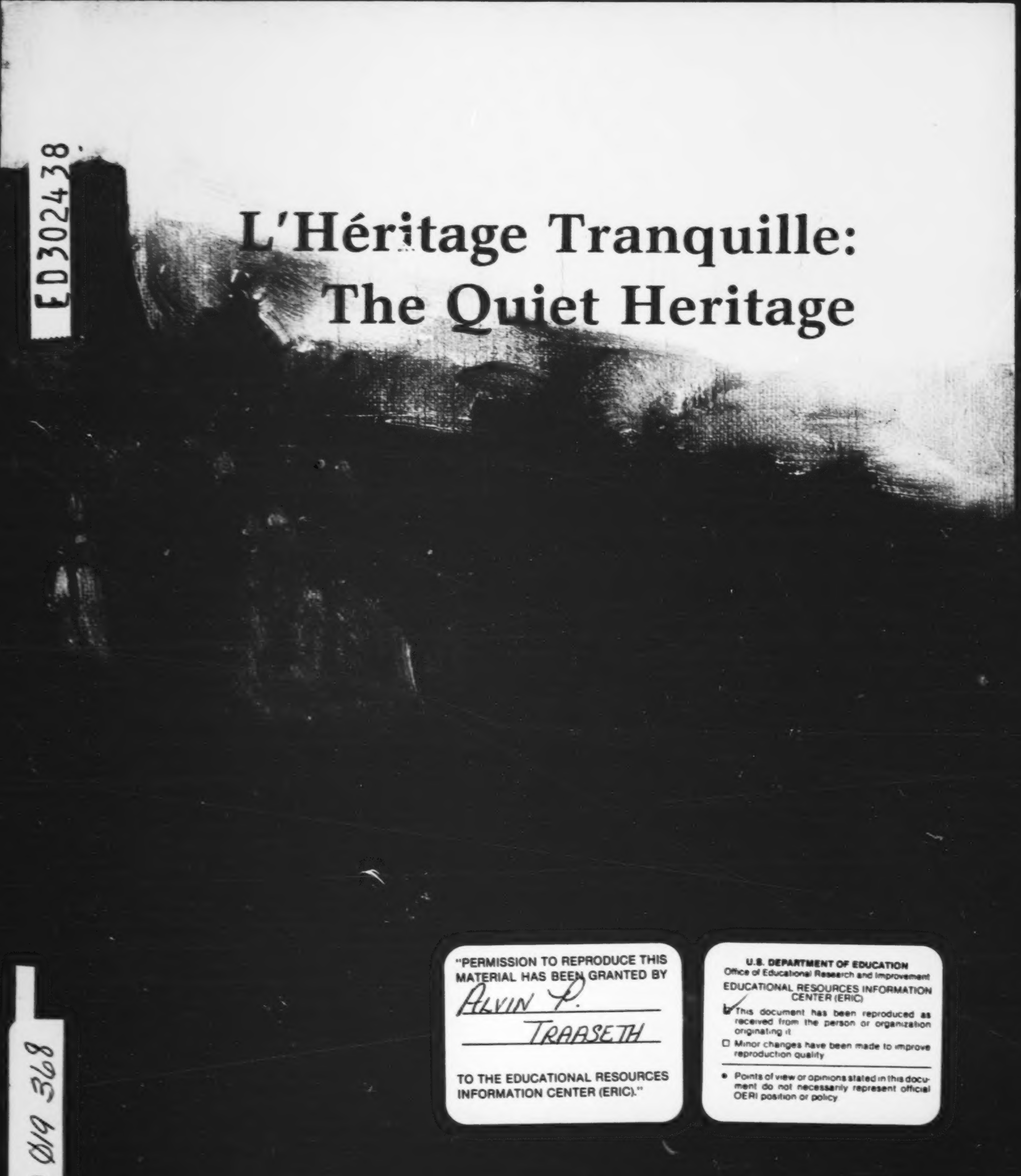

# L'Héritage Tranquille:
# The Quiet Heritage

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Proceedings from a conference sponsored by Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota

# L'Héritage Tranquille: The Quiet Heritage

Proceedings from a conference on the
contributions of the French to the Upper Midwest
November 9, 1985

Edited by Clarence A. Glasrud

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## Special Thanks

A special thanks to the Minnesota Humanities Commission, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Minnesota State Legislature for funding the conference which generated the papers.

**Cover:** Alexis Jean Fournier, Minnesota's link with the great French Impressionists, painted a number of views of the Chateau Gaillard at Les Andelys on the River Seine south of Rouen. "Chateau Gaillard in the Mist," which illustrates the covers of this collection of articles, is discussed by Dr. Rena N. Coen on page 98. (The Fournier paintings reproduced in this collection are from private collections in Minneapolis.)

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# The 60th Anniversary of the Trans-Atlantic Flight of Charles A. Lindbergh

by Judith Ann Schiff

**Editor's note:** *Charles A. Lindbergh, the Minnesota boy who made the first nonstop flight across the Atlantic, landed at Le Bourget airfield outside Paris on May 21, 1927. "Lucky Lindy" became an instant world hero, but he also forged an important emotional link between France and the United States by his flight from New York to Paris.*

*A few days after this book on the contributions of the French to this area comes off the press, the 60th anniversary of Lindbergh's flight will be celebrated in Paris. A program of activities has been organized by the Charles A. Lindbergh Fund for the week of May 18, 1987. The Fund is headquartered in Minneapolis. Lindbergh's boyhood home and the Lindbergh Museum are located in his hometown of Little Falls, Minnesota. The Advisory Board of the International Language Villages will participate in the commemorative activities in France.*

*For these reasons — because the celebration coincides with the publication of this volume and because a special link between France and the United States resulted from the feat of a young Minnesota barnstorming pilot just 60 years ago — the Lindbergh story is reviewed here.*

*Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic had consequences beyond the thrill it gave to millions of people 60 years ago. Increased public confidence in commercial aviation ushered in a new era of transportation. And the enthusiastic reception this "Eagle of the U.S.A." received when he landed in France added a new dimension to the historic bond between the United States and France.*

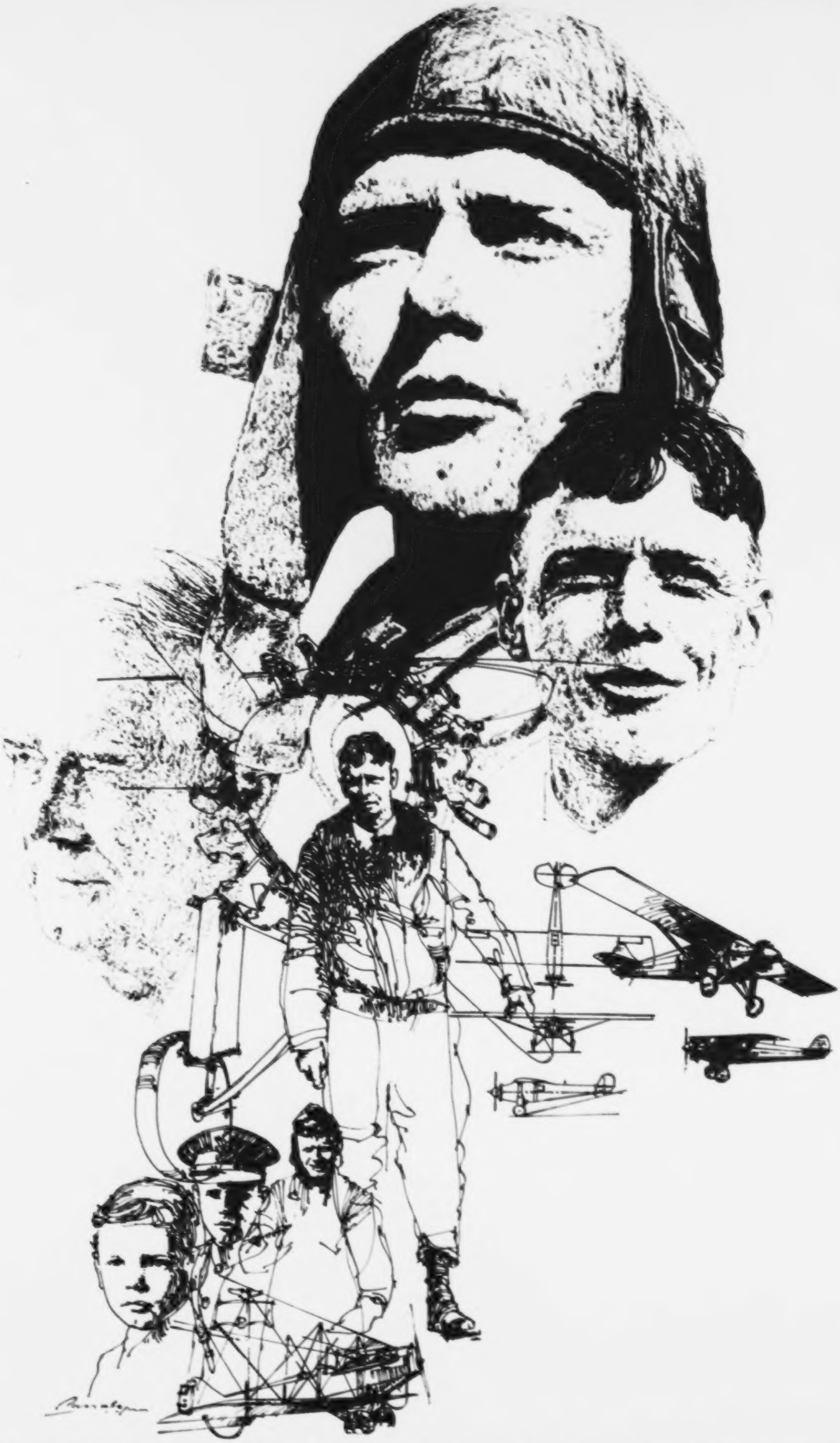
*The Charles A. Lindbergh Foundation hopes the 60th anniversary observance in late May 1987 "will provide another occasion for the people of the United States and Minnesota and the citizens of France to renew their long history of close association and friendship." A replica of the Lindbergh sculpture on the state capitol grounds in St. Paul will be presented to France and will be unveiled and dedicated at a yet-to-be-determined site in Paris.*

*Charles A. Lindbergh*

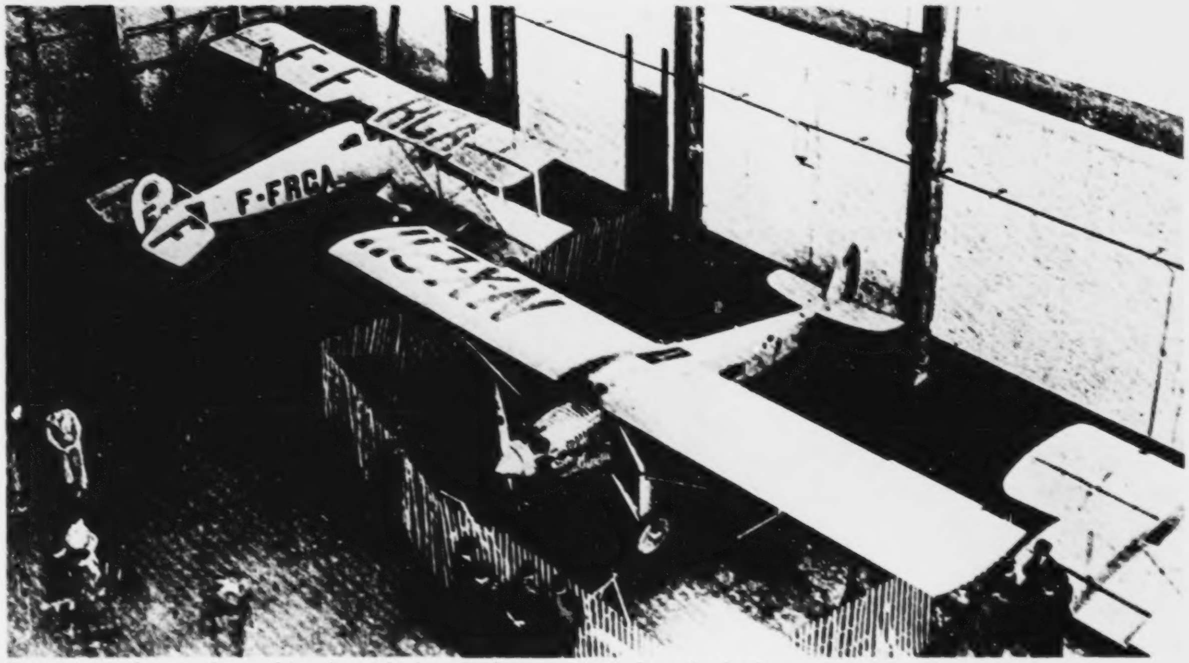
*Judith Ann Schiff, chief research archivist at Yale University and historical archivist of the Charles A. Lindbergh Fund — to refresh memories of those stirring days — has provided the following account of what happened 60 years ago this May:*

## The Significance of Lindbergh's Flight

"Lindbergh Does It," proclaimed the banner headline of *The New York Times*, Sunday, May 22, 1927. Newspapers throughout the world hailed not only the success of the flight but the recognition of a new hero. From the time of the landing at Le Bourget, journalists and later historians recognized that Lindbergh's accomplishment was a very special feat that held meaning on several levels. While the pilot was struggling with the elements and his weariness, the multitudes endured the long silent hours with mounting anxiety and anticipation. The



David Passalacqua, a professor at Pratt Institute, Syracuse University and the Parsons School of Design, is a painter, sculptor, photographer and illustrator. His award-winning illustrations have been seen in *Time, Life, Sports Illustrated, Fortune, Ladies Home Journal, Boy's Life,* and on the covers of numerous books. Born in San Francisco and now a resident of Sayville, Long Island, Mr. Passalacqua uses bold techniques to express the vigor of America in his art.



*Damage was done to the machine the night it arrived, canvas torn along the fuselage.*

news of Lindbergh's safe arrival was received with universal joy and in America with almost inexplicable pride.

For nearly half an hour after his landing at Le Bourget, Lindbergh was borne aloft by the hysterical crowd. Then the French military placed Lindbergh's flying helmet on the head of an American correspondent and cried, "Here is Lindbergh." The focus of the crowd's adulation shifted, and Lindbergh was able to escape to a nearby hangar. From there he was taken to the American Embassy, where he was interviewed by the press until after 4 a.m. Lindbergh had been without sleep for nearly three days.

From the moment he stepped out on the balcony of the embassy the next day to greet the waiting throng, it was evident that Lindbergh's personality was having a charismatic effect. As one writer put it: "The reason Lindbergh's story is different is that when his plane came to a halt on Le Bourget field that black night in Paris, Lindbergh the man kept on going."

After calling his mother in Detroit, Lindbergh called on Madame Nungesser, the mother of the brave French pilot who disappeared on his attempted trans-Atlantic flight a few days earlier. Later, the president of the French Republic pinned the Cross of the Legion of Honor upon the lapel of Lindbergh's borrowed suit.

Lindbergh gave his first speech at the Aero Club of France, where he was received by the Minister of War and 50 of the leading aviators of France. Instead of speaking of his own accomplishment, Lindbergh paid tribute to the courage of Nungesser and Coli. Then Ambassador Myron T. Herrick spoke of the newly strengthened goodwill between the two countries. When he said, "This young man from out of the West brings you better than anything else the spirit of America," the recognition of Lindbergh as "ambassador without portfolio" began.

The following day he was greeted by 600 Americans at the American Club. At a reception in the president's residence, Lindbergh responded to a welcoming speech with these words: "Gentlemen, 132 years ago Benjamin Franklin was asked: 'What good is your balloon? What will it accomplish?' He replied: 'What good is a new born child?' . . . Today these skeptics might ask me what good has been my flight from New York to Paris. My answer is that I believe it is the forerunner of a great air service from America to France, America to Europe, to bring our peoples nearer together in understanding and in friendship than they have ever been."

Numerous receptions and honors followed. On May 28, Lindbergh took off from Le Bourget in his newly repaired and recovered *Spirit of St. Louis*, circled the Eiffel Tower, and dropped a farewell note of thanks to the people of Paris. He flew on to visit Brussels and London. In London the crowds were as demonstrative as in Paris, and Lindbergh had to take off before the end of the landing roll to avoid injuring the many people who broke through the police lines. He was received by the prime minister, King George and Queen Mary, and the Prince of Wales.

Lindbergh had hoped to continue his air tour in the *Spirit of St. Louis*, but President Coolidge sent orders to sail home. The plane was dismantled and packed aboard the crusier *Memphis*, flagship of the U.S. European Fleet. On June 4, Lindbergh embarked at Cherbourg for Washington.

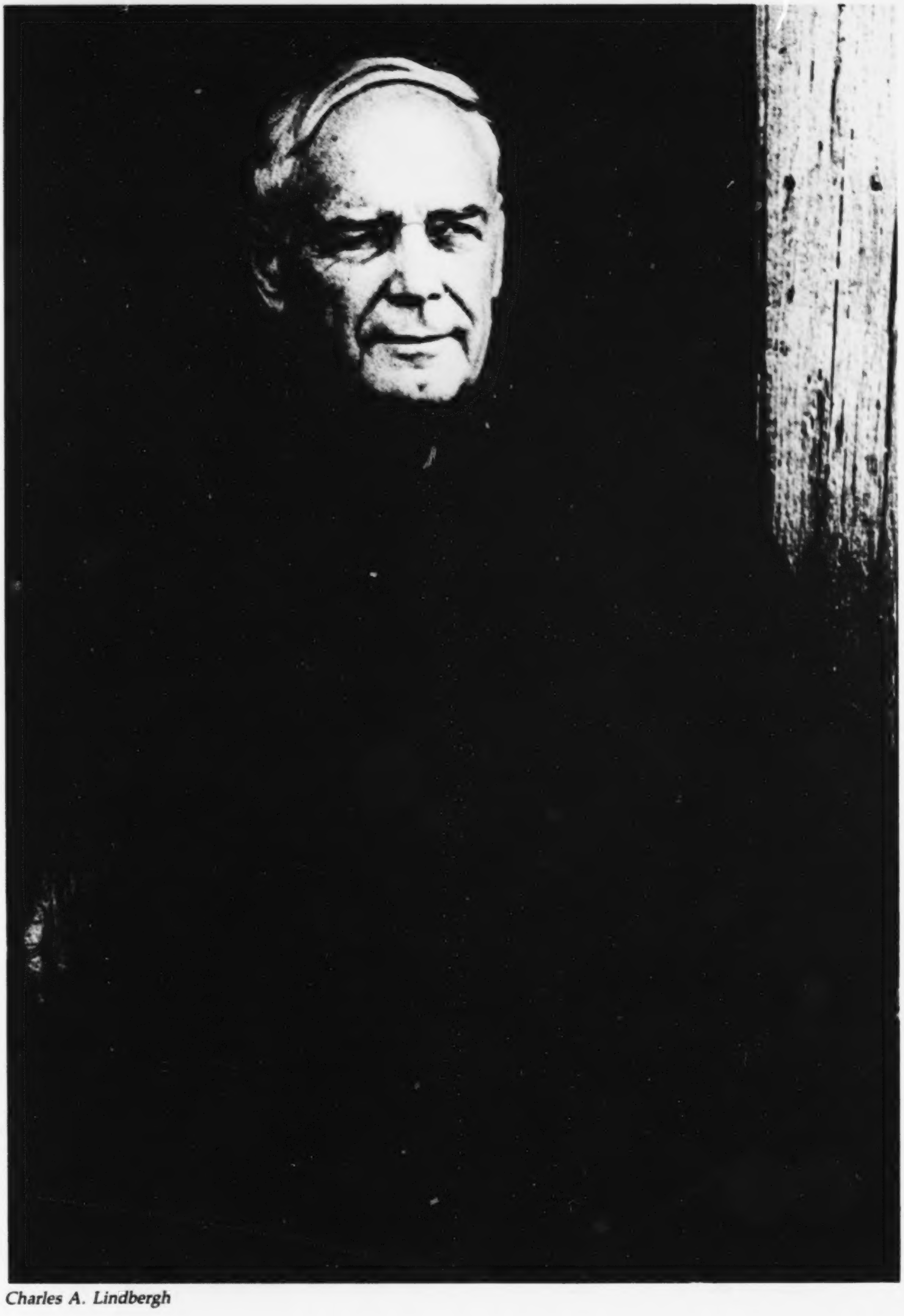
The *Memphis* steamed up Chesapeake Bay on June 10 accompanied by a convoy of four destroyers, two army blimps and 40 airplanes of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. Captain Lindbergh was promoted to colonel in the Air Reserve Corps by Secretary of War Davis. The next day, Lindbergh was given a hero's welcome. Accompanied by cabinet officers, high officials and his mother, Evangeline, Lindbergh was escorted by parade along Pennsylvania Avenue to the Washington Monument, where he was received by President and Mrs. Coolidge. The usually laconic Coolidge praised Lindbergh's personal qualities and his accomplishments at length, and bestowed upon him the Distinguished Flying Cross (the first time it was awarded).

Other receptions were held that day and the next, and on the morning of June 13, Lindbergh flew to New York City. When he set down in an amphibian plane in the harbor, he was surrounded by 500 vessels of every description, including fireboats spraying fountains. Overhead the air was filled with planes. A cavalcade formed at the Battery and proceeded up Broadway to Central Park in a blizzard of ticker tape. A stop was made at City Hall, where Mayor James J. Walker awarded Lindbergh the Medal of Valor, and in Central Park he was honored by Governor Alfred E. Smith. It was estimated that about four million people cheered in the streets.

On June 16, Raymond Orteig awarded Lindbergh the prize check of $25,000, and on June 17, Lindbergh flew home to St. Louis. The crowd was smaller of course, but the outpouring of enthusiasm and pride was unequaled. On June 22, Lindbergh flew to Dayton to visit personally with Orville Wright and refused any public appearances for several weeks.

In the United States, Lindbergh's flight affected almost every aspect of life, from politics to transportation to fashion. Most of all, it made one "glad to be an American." Europeans appreciated the good will that the flight engendered, which eased some of the animosity caused by America's rejection of the League of Nations. The flight became a symbolic bridge between New York and Paris and was credited with the ratification of the Kellogg-Briand Pact for the renunciation of war. It also came to symbolize the lost generation's finding itself.

*The President of the Republic has just decorated* Lindbergh *with the Legion of Honour. From left to right:* Lindbergh, Dr. Doumergue, Mr. Myron Herrick, *the American Ambassador.*



*Charles A. Lindbergh*

But the basic purpose of the flight was to promote aviation. In the year following the flight, commercial use of airlines quadrupled as public confidence was built up. The success of Lindbergh's flight demonstrated the feasibility of a new industry, which in turn ushered in sweeping social changes throughout the world. "The Eagle of the U.S.A." became a universal hero, and a symbol of the continuing possibility of individual human accomplishments in an age of automation.

The modest Lindbergh was reluctant to make speeches. When he was asked to address the Aero Club of France, he said nothing about himself or his recent feat. On May 24, however, in a luncheon speech to the American Club of Paris, he explained how the flight had come about. In the same matter-of-fact way, Lindbergh said something of the flight itself. The following version was published on May 25, 1927, in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch:*

## Lindbergh's Speech in Paris

Telling of his New York-to-Paris flight in a speech at the luncheon given in his honor on May 24 by the American Club of Paris, Capt. Lindbergh said:

"Gentlemen, I am not going to express my appreciation of the reception I have had here in Paris by the French. I would be unable to do so in words. But I will tell you a little about the flight from New York, and I believe you will be more interested in that than anything I can say, because I am not used to public speaking.

"We first considered this project last fall in St. Louis. We had one of the most successful air races there that has ever been made, so we decided to organize a flight. At that time the Atlantic flight from New York to Paris seemed to be the greatest achievement we could consider — although there are other projects that would be greater — because a flight from New York to Paris meant a good deal to us.

"There is no other country after America in which we would rather land than France, and I believe the name of the plane itself, *Spirit of St. Louis,* was meant to convey a certain meaning to the people of France. I hope it has.

"There was a good deal of consideration of the type of plane to be used in the flight, but the single-motored was considered the best; the reason for not carrying an observer was that we could carry more gasoline without one. It was impossible to miss the coastline of Euorpe, but we might have missed the coast of France by a few hundred miles if we had not carried enough fuel.

"The order for the plane was placed in San Diego. The motor of this plane is, I consider, one of the best types made in America. The record of the Wright motors is greater than that of any other type.

"After visiting San Diego, I awaited favorable weather conditions in the United States to make the flight to New York. It was during that time that the immortal Frenchmen, Nungesser and Coli, left France — as I have said before, on a much greater flight, from France to America, because they were knowingly going into greater difficulties on account of wind and weather than from America to France.

"Unfortunately, they probably met on the western coast with as bad weather conditions as ever existed.

"During four days I was tied up in San Diego awaiting clearer weather to go to New York. Finally we left San Diego one evening flying over the mountains during the night, and arrived in St. Louis. Then from St. Louis we went to New York.

"In New York we were again delayed by weather conditions and it was necessary to check the motor and plane, but nothing beyond inspection was done to either the motor or the plane.

"The machine had already done 6200 miles, over 61 hours. I think this demonstrates the reliability of the commercial motor of today and demonstrates also the reliability of planes of modern construction.

"We finally decided to leave New York upon receiving fairly good weather reports. After working on the plane and making ready for the flight, we left New York at 7:52 in the morning (Friday) May 20. (Lindbergh habitually refers to himself and his plane as WE.)

"Weather conditions were satisfactory over Newfoundland, but after leaving the coast it was necessary to fly over 10,000 feet because of sleet.

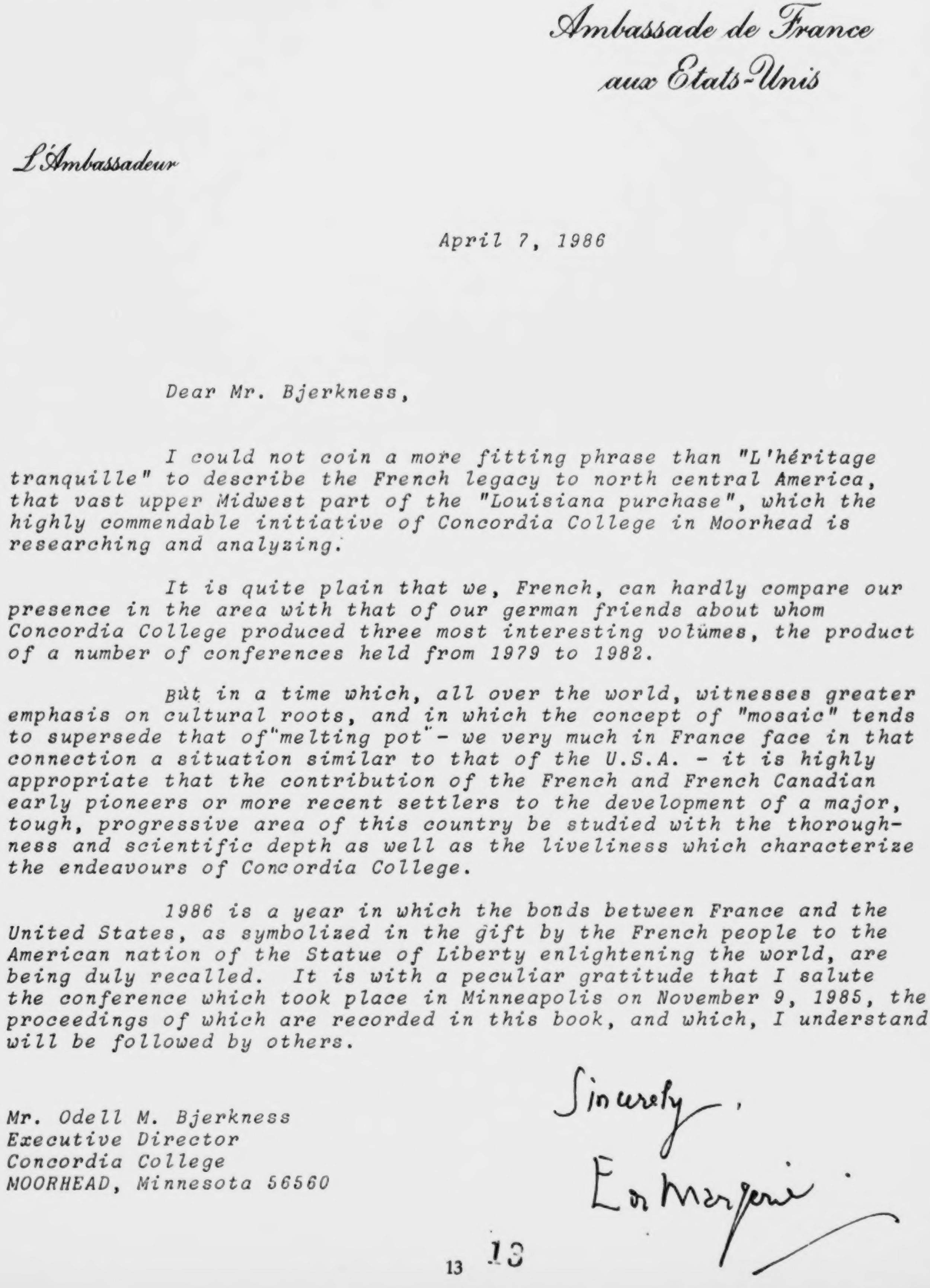
"Then at night we flew over 8,000 to 10,000 feet, but in the daytime we plowed through the fog. We finally followed up a course definitely about three miles north of the point on the western coast of Ireland which we had hoped to reach.

"I want to say that the fact that we came within three miles of that point was an accident. Had it been 25 miles it might have been navigation.

"During the entire trip I saw no ship at any time. The first trace of a human being was a small fishing boat, probably 50 miles from Ireland. Several hours after leaving Newfoundland I saw the lights of one boat. There were large ice fields.

"My time is very short now and I believe I will be unable to tell you more of my flight at present. I hope I haven't taken up too much of your time as it is."

**Letter from Emmanuel Jacquin de Margerie, Ambassador of France to the United States**



Ambassade de France
aux Etats-Unis

L'Ambassadeur

*April 7, 1986*

*Dear Mr. Bjerkness,*

*I could not coin a more fitting phrase than "L'héritage tranquille" to describe the French legacy to north central America, that vast upper Midwest part of the "Louisiana purchase", which the highly commendable initiative of Concordia College in Moorhead is researching and analyzing.*

*It is quite plain that we, French, can hardly compare our presence in the area with that of our german friends about whom Concordia College produced three most interesting volumes, the product of a number of conferences held from 1979 to 1982.*

*But in a time which, all over the world, witnesses greater emphasis on cultural roots, and in which the concept of "mosaic" tends to supersede that of "melting pot" - we very much in France face in that connection a situation similar to that of the U.S.A. - it is highly appropriate that the contribution of the French and French Canadian early pioneers or more recent settlers to the development of a major, tough, progressive area of this country be studied with the thoroughness and scientific depth as well as the liveliness which characterize the endeavours of Concordia College.*

*1986 is a year in which the bonds between France and the United States, as symbolized in the gift by the French people to the American nation of the Statue of Liberty enlightening the world, are being duly recalled. It is with a peculiar gratitude that I salute the conference which took place in Minneapolis on November 9, 1985, the proceedings of which are recorded in this book, and which, I understand, will be followed by others.*

Sincerely,

E de Margerie

*Mr. Odell M. Bjerkness*
*Executive Director*
*Concordia College*
*MOORHEAD, Minnesota 56560*

# Luncheon Remarks

*At the November 9, 1985, conference,* L'Héritage Tranquille, *or The Quiet Heritage, M. Max de Calbiac, the French consul général in Chicago, represented M. Emmanuel Jacquin de Margerie, ambassador from France to the United States, who was unable to be present.*

*M. de Calbiac gave us permission to use these brief paragraphs as the gist of his luncheon remarks:*

What a history! Far into the interior of a new continent, the French came from the north. They were explorers, traders, missionaries. They paddled and canoed along the upper Mississippi and the broad rivers of mid-America. They travelled in the wilderness of an unknown land where they met and traded with the Indians. They opened a new empire in the name of their country and of their king. But human endeavors are fragile, and it soon was to fall with the settlement of new colonists who came from the Atlantic seaboard and expanded westward.

Nevertheless, the influence of these pioneers remains. It remains with their saga kept alive as a source of inspiration for children and grown-ups alike and through a toponymy which so often reminds us of France as in the seal of the state of Minnesota: "L'Etoile du Nord."

In today's modern world, the links between this part of the United States and France are still very strong, though different. They thrive on extensive cultural exchanges and cooperation in the most advanced fields of technology. So, we are faithful to our common history and consistently continue to enhance a "héritage tranquille" – "a quiet heritage."

I am glad to express my thanks to all those who are today dedicated to preserve and enrich a legacy worth remembering. And among them, the International Language Villages of Concordia which, under the leadership of Professor Odell Bjerkness, so aptly organized the "Héritage Tranquille" Conference, deserves our heartful gratitude.

---

A native of southwest France, Max de Calbiac is a graduate of Ecole nationale de la France d'outre-mer and holds degrees in law and economics from the University of Paris.

He entered the diplomatic service with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris in 1962 and has held posts in London, Rome, Stockholm, Lagos and with the United Nations and International Organizations Division of the Foreign Ministry.

Prior to assumming his present position as consul général of France in Chicago, he was first counselor at the embassy in Belgrade.

M. de Calbiac is a Knight of the National Order of Merit and holds the Cross of the Valeur Militaire.

*On the steps of Our Lady of Lourdes Church: Odell Bjerkness on the left, Mrs. Boisclair, Consul Général de Calbiac and Robert Boisclair (Robert Paulson: North Star Photography).*

# Preface

Before the Pilgrims on the Mayflower landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620, French explorers were making their passages along the waterways of North America and had reached the uppermost part of the great inland sea, naming it Superior. This westward push was motivated in part by the search for the fabled Northwest Passage but was also fueled by a desire to trade and explore in the interior of this new land. By the early 1680s, the French had explored the Upper Mississippi and claimed a mid-American empire for the Sun King, Louis XIV. In their search for the riches which this land of forests, lakes and rivers had to offer, the French left behind a legacy of names on the map of the North American continent. From this early exploration and development, there are many now-familiar names, although we often overlook the person or event connected with the name of a county, town or street: Marquette, LaSalle, Lac Qui Parle, Nicollet, Hennepin or Duluth, to mention only a few in Minnesota.

In 1980, 300 years after these intrepid travelers had left their mark (and names) on the region, nearly 13 million people in the United States census listed French as their heritage. In this same self-identification question, 304,000 Minnesotans claimed French heritage as their primary background. Also in 1980, a language survey was conducted in Minnesota. The results were somewhat surprising: over 10,000 residents reported that French was spoken in their homes. This evidence of a continuing legacy of French is all the more remarkable when one considers the span of time which has elapsed since most of the immigration of French speakers occurred. In addition to these tenacious linguistic aspects, there is strong evidence of a continuing and expanding interest in the French language and cultural heritage. In Minnesota, French is taught in about seventy school districts. Some 14,000 students are enrolled in French language programs, making it the third largest modern language program in the state. The International Language Villages program in French at Lac du Bois is in its twenty-seventh year: founded in 1962, it had an enrollment of 1,018 in the summer program for youngsters of elementary and secondary school ages in 1986. In addition, other programs throughout the area provide instruction in the French language to adults – as well as courses in French cuisine.

Despite the large numbers of people involved in language and cultural programs, much of the rich French heritage of Minnesota remains largely unknown to persons outside of the ethnic group itself. In an effort to illuminate the French heritage in Minnesota and the Midwest, the International Language Villages and the French department of Concordia College, supported by several other groups, determined to sponsor an in-depth conference, "L'Héritage Tranquille: The Quiet Heritage."

"The Quiet Heritage" was modeled after several very successful conferences which had explored the state's largest ethnic group, the Germans. The conferences on the Germans were held during the preceding six years and resulted in three publications of the proceedings. As with the preceding conferences, a group of interested academic and lay persons came together to form a planning council. This council met several times to ensure that issues of importance and interest would be explored in a clear and understandable manner.

"The Quiet Heritage" was envisioned to provide stimulating, thought-provoking examples in a suggested humanities framework, into which participants were encouraged to integrate the French-American ethnic experience. The total program presented an overview of experiences and responses unique to French-Americans. There was also an integration of those experiences and responses within a broader framework of the humanities disciplines, which encouraged those in attendance to apply their understandings to the experiences and responses of other ethnic groups in American society. For these reasons the presenters were encouraged to draw upon various disciplines: language, literature, archaeology (among others) – and not only history, political science or sociology. The topics under consideration were presented as a humanities whole rather than as discrete topics.

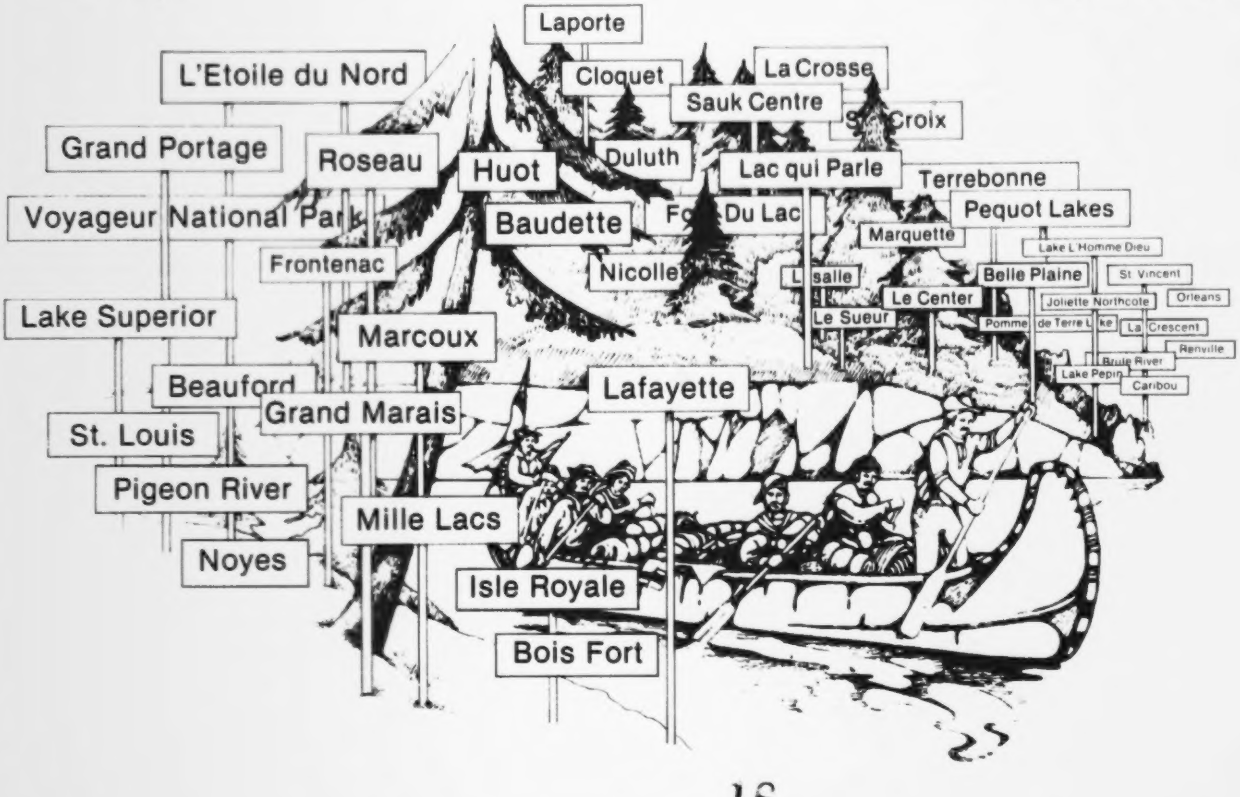
It was the hope of the planning committee that the audience, lay and academic, would interact with the presenters to explore issues – the issues which had created tensions between French-Americans and other citizens of the state and region. We feel that this was achieved.

The conference was held at the site of the Village of All Saints: this settlement, started in 1849 near the Falls of St. Anthony, subsequently became Minneapolis. The falls themselves figured prominently in the history of the early French exploration and settlement of the Midwest. For decades the Mississippi and its tributaries served as the gateway to the north and as a supply point for the Red River trade by ox cart.

The conference attracted nearly 400 participants. The planning committee had extended a special invitation to M. Denis Nardin of the French Embassy in Washington and to Mme. Anne Hoffman, the French cultural attaché in Chicago. M. Max de Calbiac, the consul general for France in Chicago, the luncheon speaker at the conference, addressed issues of current importance in French-American relations.

In order to successfully present a conference of the magnitude of "L'Héritage Tranquille," the cooperation and participation of many groups and individuals was necessary. The conference was funded by Concordia College and the International Language Villages with a major grant from the Minnesota Humanities Commission, in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Minnesota Legislature. Other sponsors of the conference included the Department of French and Russian, Concordia College, Moorhead; the *Alliance Française de Villes Jumelles;* The French-American Chamber of Commerce; the Minnesota Chapter of American Association of Teachers of French; the Minnesota Historical Society; the Minnesota Project on Ethnic America; the Minnesota International Center; the Northwest Territory French and Canadian Heritage Institute; the *Société Canadienne-Française du Minnesota;* and the Department of French, University of Minnesota.

Members of the Conference Planning Committee were Dr. Virgil Benoit, contributor; Odell Bjerkness, contributor; Alfred Dahlquist, Northwest Territory French and Canadian Heritage Institute; Gerald Foley, Public Affairs Office, Canadian Consulate; Ralph Germain, *Société Canadienne-Française du Minnesota;* Dr. Clarence Glasrud, editor; Suzanne Jebe, program specialist, modern and classical languages, Minnesota State Department of Education; Jasmine Kellor, honorary French consul; Dr. Melva Lind, president, the Alliance Française; Tony McRae, chair, Department of French and Russian, Concordia College, Moorhead; Linda Paulson, Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis; François Pétré,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Duluth
Lac qui Parle
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Voyageur National Park
Baudette
Fo Du Lac
Pequot Lakes
Marquette
Lake L'Homme Dieu
Frontenac
Nicolle
L salle
Belle Plaine
St Vincent
Lake Superior
Le Center
Joliette Northcote
Orleans
Le Sueur
Pomme de Terre L ke
La Crescent
Marcoux
Renville
Brule River
Lake Pepin
Caribou
Beauford
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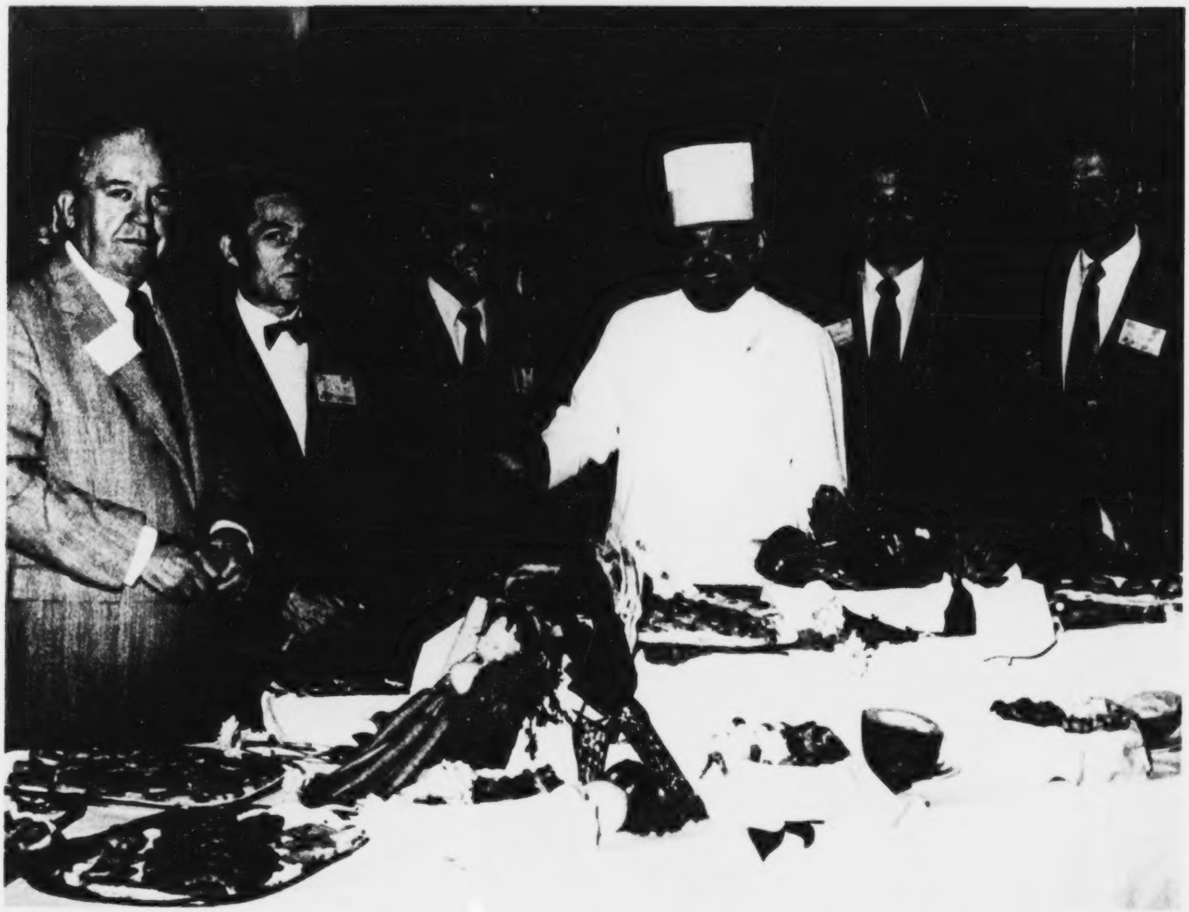
Isle Royale
Bois Fort



*Facing a table of food at the Friday evening opening reception at the J.J. Hill House are Don Padilla, president of the Lindbergh Fund; Denis Nordin, first secretary of the French Embassy in Washington, D.C.; Max de Calbiac, consul général of France in Chicago; Chef Christien Caille; David Gring, academic dean of Concordia College; and Conference Director Odell Bjerkness (Robert Paulson: North Star Photography).*

French-American Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Armand Renaud and Madeleine Renaud, *Alliance Française;* Louis Ritchot, *Société Canadienne-Française du Minnesota;* John Rivard, contributor; William Rogers, the Minnesota International Center; Sarah Rubinstein, Minnesota Historical Society; and Dr. Mary Lou Wolsey, Department of Foreign Languages, College of St. Thomas, St. Paul.

*Christian K. Skjervold*
*Odell M. Bjerkness*

Odell M. Bjerkness and Christian K. Skjervold planned and directed the conference. Bjerkness, associate professor of modern language at Concordia College, is the director of the International Language Villages and the May Seminars Abroad. Skjervold, a teacher in the Minneapolis Public Schools, is the former president of the Upper Midwest Ethnic Studies Association.

# Introduction

This collection of articles records a one-day conference held in Minneapolis November 9, 1985, on the contributions of the French to the Upper Midwest. Although some of the articles included are scholarly, this is not a scholarly volume: the conference was directed toward a broad audience and some of the presentations were popular in nature.

The 1985 symposium, like the three conferences on German-Americans in 1979, 1982 and 1983, was sponsored by Concordia College (of Moorhead) and its International Language Villages with a grant from the Minnesota Humanities Commission. The enmity stirred up in two World Wars caused German-Americans to play down their European origins. Despite the celebrated friendship between France and the United States for more than 200 years, French-Americans, too, have failed to explore and record the story of the French in America. As with the Germans, one of the reasons has been the complexity and variability of the record.

"L'Héritage Tranquille," and another conference projected for 1989 (two hundred years after the fall of the Bastille!) necessarily range far in time and space. The first French came to the New World nearly four centuries ago, and for more than 300 years some have come directly from France (or from Belgium, Switzerland and Haiti) to what is now the United States. Many more French-Americans, however, have come to the United States from Canada in the past 200 years. Some of them were only partly French by the time they entered the United States because the early *voyageurs* commonly took Indian wives. The story of the French-Indian *métis* is an important part of the chronicle in the Upper Midwest.

Dr. Virgil Benoit, who gave the keynote address at the Minneapolis Quiet Heritage conference, titled his paper "Contact and Consequence: An Introduction to Over 300 Years of French Presence in the Northwest." Dr. Benoit explained the title of the conference, "L'Héritage Tranquille, or the Quiet Heritage": after 1760, when the French lost military and political control of the territory they had explored and partially settled, "the French in North America were cut off from any intellectual and general contact with France." As a result, said Benoit, the activities of the 100,000 French in the New World were marked by "political quietism," a position "certainly reflexive when felt from the inside, yet 'quiet' when viewed from the outside."

Benoit's overview effectively introduces this subject and collection of papers. Drawing on his personal heritage and a lifelong concern with the French Canadians of the Upper Midwest, he played a major role in organizing the conference. His introduction points out the scope and nature of the French heritage in North America. Benoit gave some attention to the individuals and groups who came directly to the United States from French-speaking parts of Europe; his chief emphasis, however, is on the French Canadians, who have played such an important role in the settlement and development of Minnesota and its surrounding American states and Canadian provinces.

Three of the papers in this collection deal with the French-Indian people of the Canadian-American border country, the *métis*, who attempted a century ago to set up their own nation because they considered themselves a separate people. Dennis de Montigny, who terms himself a half-breed, briefly outlines "A Brief History of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians." Dr. John Crawford explains and illustrates the language of this mixed people in "The Michif Language." This all-important aspect of French impact on the Upper Midwest is discussed very fully in a second paper by Virgil Benoit. "French Presence in the Red River Valley – Part I: A History of the *Métis* to 1870" was presented at a conference that did not publish its papers, and Dr. Benoit allowed us to print it here. It is the only paper that was not a part of the Minneapolis conference.

Three of the conference presentations did not include formal papers prepared for publication. However, John Rivard, Minnesota's

"Official Voyageur," produced a written version of the popular lecture he has given to many types of audiences, young and old, explaining (and sometimes demonstrating) how the early fur traders lived and worked as they made the first penetration of Europeans into the wilderness that is now Minnesota. By using a taped transcript, we also present (with his consent) the talk given by the Reverend Allan Moss in the historic Our Lady of Lourdes Church, which is located at "Riverplace," the conference location. Father Moss told the history of his church and the French presence at the Falls of St. Anthony. He ended his talk by recounting the role of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in sustaining French culture in Minnesota.

Douglas Birk, an anthropologist for the Institute of Minnesota Archaeology, outlined the "Archaeological History of the French in the Upper Mississippi Valley" in a slide presentation at the Minneapolis conference. For a time we hoped he could submit a publishable version of his talk, or a short photo-essay. However, when Birk was given the Minnesota Independent Scholar of the Year Award in 1986, the demands on his time became so great that he could not participate in this publication.

Sometime in the future, no doubt, Douglas

*Dressed in his colorful costume as Minnesota's "Official Voyageur," John Rivard speaks to his audience before a map of the Great Lakes – Upper Middle West area – reaching as far north as Hudson Bay. Rivard is explaining the construction of Indian birch bark canoes (Robert Paulson: North Star Photography).*

*Father Moss with Thorwaldsen's "Kneeling Angel," in Our Lady of Lourdes Church (Robert Paulson: North Star Photography).*

Birk will write about the role of archaeology in understanding the French presence in Minnesota during the last century – before defeat at the hands of the British in 1760 ended French hopes. In his conference talk, he spoke about the changing goals and objectives of archaeology in recent years. Instead of seeking evidence that could lead to reconstruction of an old fort, archaeologists now seek information about the people who occupied the early French outposts: how they lived, what they ate, and what implements they used. Some twelve to fifteen early French posts in Minnesota can be documented, said Birk, "but that doesn't mean we can find them!"

Slow and painstaking as the work necessarily is, archaeologists will eventually add much to our knowledge of the French presence in Minnesota two and three centuries ago. Douglas Birk gave a progress report at the *Quiet Heritage* conference.

There is some kinship between Father Moss' oral presentation, in its account of the difficulties in preserving French culture in America, and "The Assimilation and Acculturation of French Canadians" by Dr. Eve Gagné, a prepared paper that makes no pretense to disinterested objectivity. After an overview of French immigration in the 17th and 18th centuries, Gagné focused her paper on the disadvantages encountered by French-speaking Roman Catholics in a Protestant-dominated society for the next two hundred years. Despite obstacles, she argues, French Americans have developed cultural patterns that deserve special consideration in a troubled era looking for alternatives.

Benoit's introductory article is not merely an overview of the French presence in the New World. He does indeed touch on many facets of that "presence," and he himself has explored some of them in other writings. The conference that produced the articles collected here "offers no definite answers," says Benoit and concludes that the French in America were now in a privileged position to seek out the meaning of their heritage, since they now have the leisure time to reflect and interpret – and consequently achieve "a greater understanding of the complex nature of our history and current state."

A trio of scholarly papers treat aspects of French settlement in America that must hold surprises for most French-Americans. Dr. André Prévos describes the ideological, occupational and physical structure of the French Icarian community that existed in Adams County, Iowa, from 1853 to 1898. This venture stemmed from the publication in 1840 of *Voyage en Icarie*, a fictionized version of life in an ideal communal society written by Etienne Cabet (1788-1856). Cabet followed the model of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* in his highly popular book. *Icarianism* drew its philosophical inspiration from Christianity, traditional Utopianism and the French Revolution. But, Prévos adds, the book reveals "more typical French sources of inspiration such as the strong Rousseauist influence in the dialogue, plot and general organization." An essential ingredient of the venture was a new beginning in an entirely unspoiled place. Since the Icarians had no near neighbors in Adams County in the 1850s, its members were "not tempted by occurrences beyond the limits of the settlement." Though the small community never numbered more than 150 individuals, it grew moderately into the 1860s and prospered until the 1870s, Prévos writes. Then, after some uneasiness and division later, with the loss of some of its younger members, the old Icarians divided shared community property and disbanded in 1898.

At approximately the same time a wealthy French nobleman founded "Silkville" on the Kansas prairies. Dr. L. David Harris describes the efforts of Ernest de Boissiere to establish a Fourierist colony on 3600 acres of land he had purchased in Franklin County, Kansas, in 1869. Although de Boissiere's imported Japanese silkworms produced silk of a quality that won a blue ribbon at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, Silkville was abandoned ten years later. "Once the Frenchmen who had been imported to the colony learned English,

*Dr. Winstanley Briggs' presentation was "The Family and the Enhanced Power of Women in French Colonial Illinois" (Robert Paulson: North Star Photography).*

they became poor communists," Harris writes. "They discovered that the price they paid to become members of the colony could, instead, easily finance a quarter section of Kansas land for homesteading."

The surprise in Winstanley Briggs' paper on the 18th-century French settlements in Illinois lies not in their existence but in the kinds of societies that emerged there. Americans know of the French settlements at Kaskaskia, Cahokia and Vincennes because George Rogers Clark captured them from their British garrisons during our Revolutionary War, but few know anything more about them. The title of Briggs' paper reveals something about his findings in investigating these settlements: "The Enhanced Economic Position of Women In French Colonial Illinois."

Just as Dr. Benoit's "Contact and Consequence: Introduction to Over 300 Years of French Presence in the Northwest" outlines the situation these papers deal with in their various ways, Professor Armand Renaud's article on the French language surveys the relationship between New and Old World French. This paper is also historical in part but much more than that: it demonstrates, with hundreds of examples, the relationship between North American French speech and the language commonly used in metropolitan France. So illuminating is Renaud's exegesis that his article justifies the publication of these conference papers. The many teachers of French who attended the 1985 conference in Minneapolis will now have this fine "The Mute Heritage: Perspective on the French of America" readily available as they pursue the task of preserving French language and culture in our monolingual Anglo-Saxon society.

Admittedly, there is little coherence among the papers in this collection. The conference was intended to have as wide an appeal as possible, and the presentations were, therefore, disparate in subject matter and treatment. They have only one thing in common: they treat some aspect of the French presence in the United States. Most widely separate from the other presentations was Rena Coen's "France and America: A Minnesota Artist's Experience," but there was good reason to make it a part of the conference. The author had just published a study of Alexis Fournier, and an exhibition of his paintings was opened at the James J. Hill House in St. Paul in conjunction with the conference, with Mrs. Coen as guest curator.

As noted earlier, this is not a scholarly book. Rather, like the conference that produced these papers and presentations, the purpose is to bolster French studies: to help keep alive French language and culture in the United States by any means, and to investigate and celebrate the French heritage in North America. Into some of the less scholarly papers there is a frank intrusion of boosterism and special pleading. There is even a "how-to-do-it book" by Wiley R. Pope of the Minnesota Historical Society, "Finding Your French-Canadian Roots: A Brief Guide." Pope's guide may be comparatively brief, but it is also very complete. With its appended bibliographies and list of reference works, the article provides full equipment for genealogical investigation to any American whose roots can be found in French Canada.

In this category also is "*Les Voyageurs*: A French Language Village Experience" by Christine Schulze. Miss Schulze describes the "adventure program" she led into the Minnesota-Ontario Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) in 1979. Sixteen teenagers (from 13 to 18) made a 12-day canoe trip into the BWCA under her direction to improve their skills in French and canoeing at the same time! The leader's very complete account of this Language Village venture is a stirring story, though recounted in proper pedagogical form and accompanied by an annotated reading list.

The participants in the conference titled "L'Héritage Tranquille" have been most helpful in putting this book together and in finding illustrations to enliven it. Special recognition, however, is owed to Ilene Iverson of the Concordia Language Villages office, whose patient and meticulous work has been of first importance throughout the project and to Laurie Hoium, who designed the book.

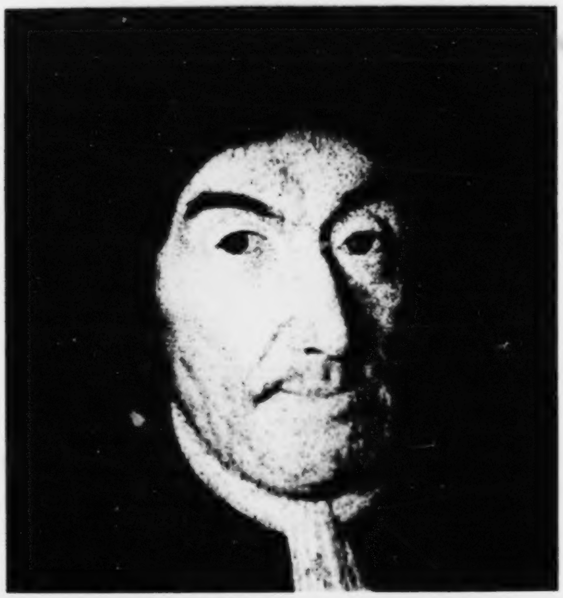
*Clarence A. Glasrud, Editor*

Professor Emeritus Clarence A. Glasrud was chairman of the Department of English at Moorhead State University for 23 years and a member of the faculty from 1947 to 1977. His M.A. and Ph.D. in English were both from Harvard. His B.E. in English, history and French was from Moorhead State University. He also studied English and history at the University of Minnesota, and German and English at Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio. He edited *The Age of Anxiety* (Houghton Mifflin, 1960) and wrote *Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Norwegian American Historical Association, 1963). More recently he has published 11 essays on American writers in *Great Writers of the English Language* (St. Martin's Press, 1979). As director of research for the Red River Valley Historical Society he edited *A History of the Red River Valley*. He is associate editor of *Studies in American Fiction* (Boston) and is on the board of editors of the Norwegian American Historical Association (Northfield, Minnesota). His research and writing concentrate on Midwestern writers and history and Norwegian-American immigration history and literature. Dr. Glasrud also edited the three volumes of *German-Americans in Minnesota*.

# Contact and Consequence: An Introduction to Over 300 Years of French Presence in the Northwest

by Virgil Benoit

We have all come together, not to praise French culture, nor to justify the North American experience, but to examine and question, so we might more clearly understand both how we have come to where and what we are today, and how we have come to think of ourselves in the ways we do today. The questions we will raise deal with exploration, trade development, and settlement as these historical activities were carried out in North America by individuals of French background. The questions we will ask have no final and definite answers, for in talking about history we are not merely depositing dates, defining personal goals, or pointing out important places. We are rather dealing with current representations of the past or arrangements of historical events so as to convey an understandable *histoire*, that is to say, a history story as the French word *histoire* itself means. As such, in the French intellectual tradition we are reminded from the outset that explanations of history change. They change because the presenters of the past change.[1]



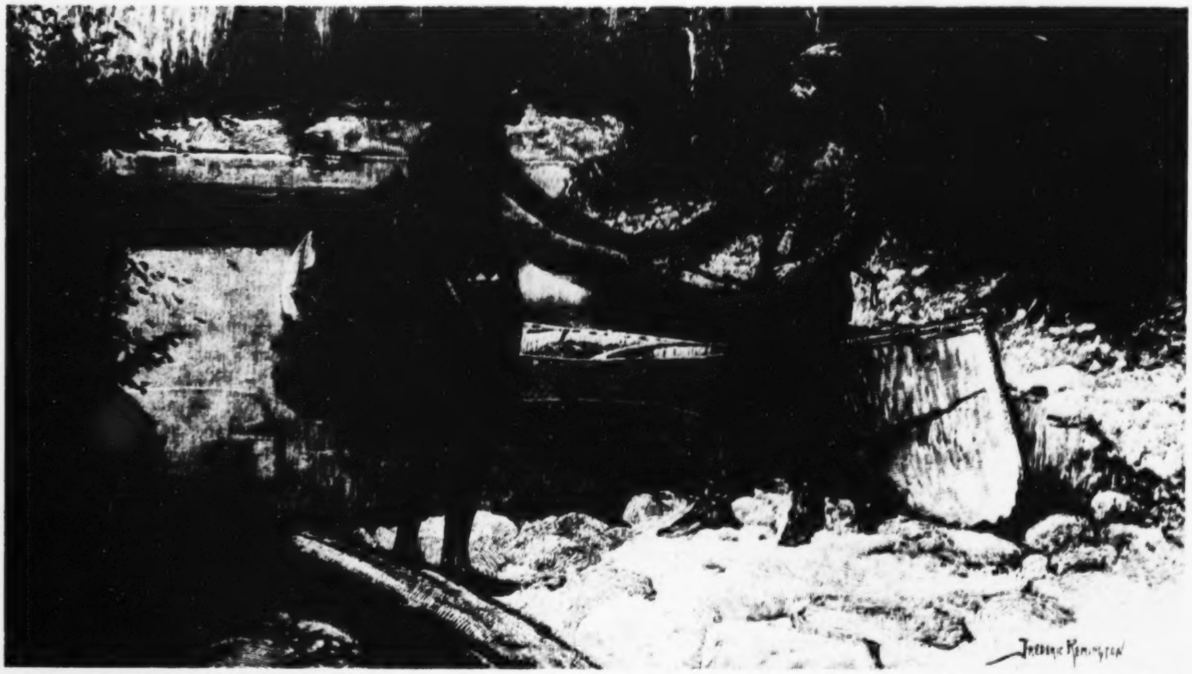
*Minnesota shares the names of many early French explorers with the rest of the nation, but Father Louis Hennepin has been almost a Minnesota state monopoly (Minnesota Historical Society: the original oil painting is in the MHS art collection).*

In 1985 we are neither at the end of a story nor at the tip of an iceberg. We are rather in the midst of all that our collective memory holds in store. And it is our ability to appreciate the story as history, or the stored as potential story that will enable us to speak creatively of our heritage.

Since biblical times Westerners have associated progress with mobility. Individuals not only left home in biblical stories, but they frequently had to solve such problems as the Great Flood alone, and, in some cases, entire peoples moved from one land to another. Later, in Western time, generations claimed they had raised themselves up high, for they stood, so to speak, on the shoulders of those who had preceded them. Massive immigrations as well as the creation of belief systems that imagine each generation above the last have separated us physically and intellectually from much of our past. Generations have been robbed of a presence of memory while theories of progress have made it possible for our nation to stretch across the surface of this land.[2]

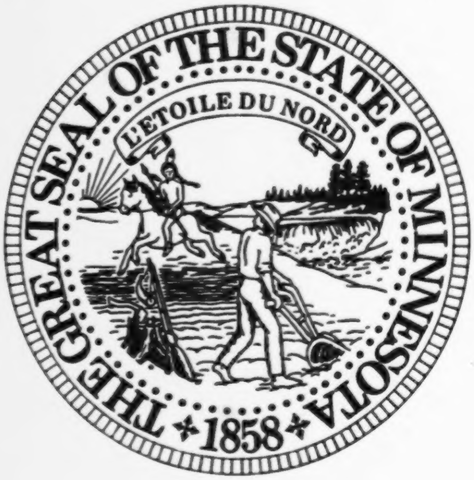
How do we add to the horizontal dimension of our history a sense of depth, a vertical line, or a heritage with roots? In the case of the French, let us begin by asking why French people came to North America. We may at the same time think about how the French shaped their social, political, and economic institutions and how the ideas and representations we have before us today are reflections of ourselves as we relate to our past and present.

If one of the first expressions a newcomer to Minnesota learns is *uff da*, the first historical character one hears about is frequently the *voyageur*. The *voyageur* is perhaps the best known element of the era of French exploration and fur trade in North America. His abilities and techniques were not only in demand during the French colonial period in America, but remained so long after 1760 when the French lost military control in North America. It is in tribute to early French explorers



*Frederick Remington titled this 1892 painting "The Coureur de Bois and the Savage " (reproduced from* Harper's Monthly Magazine, *volume 84, page 393).*

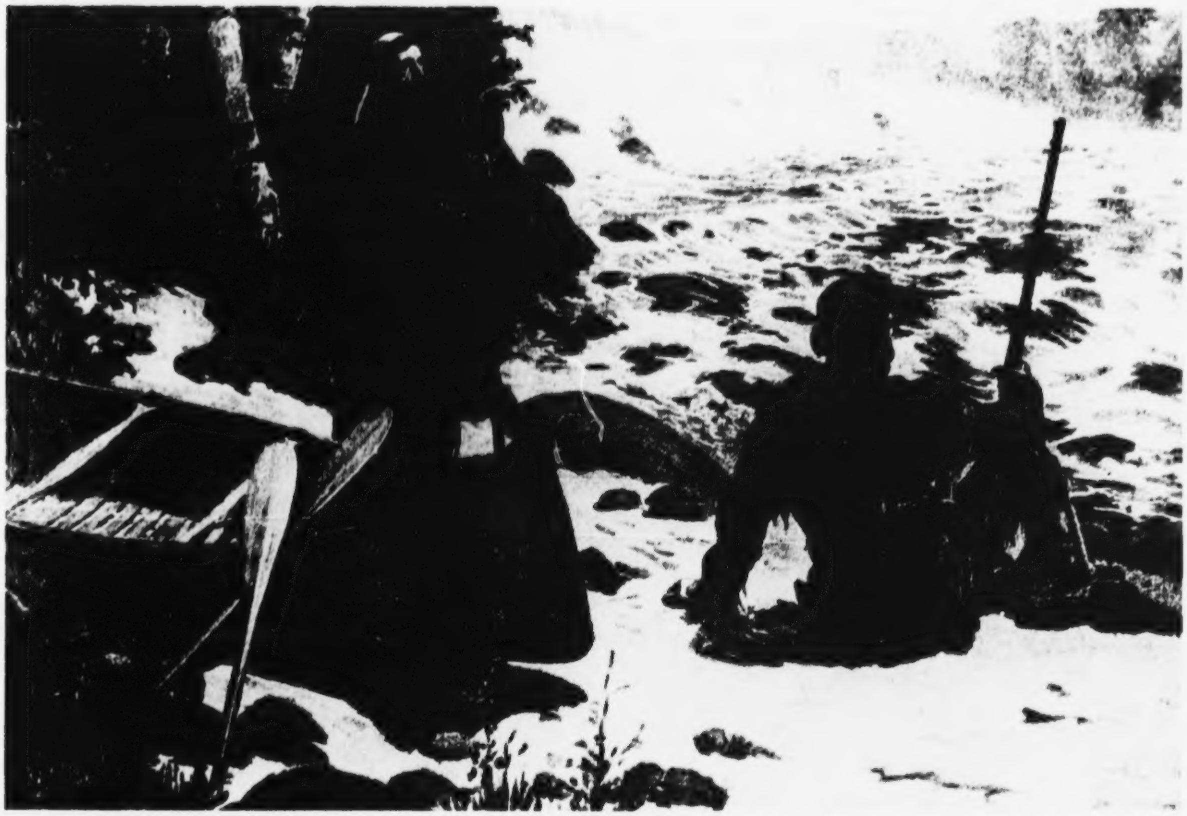
that the words "L'Etoile du Nord" have appeared on the Minnesota state seal since 1861.


THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA
L'ETOILE DU NORD
1858

But what else is there of the early French period which does not sing out as charmingly as the *voyageur,* whose joviality has come to be expected? The names of Nicolet, Perrot, Marquette, Joliet, Radisson, Groseilliers, Hennepin, La Salle, La Verendrye and Louis Riel stand out like sign posts along our historic highways, but what of social, political, and economic structures which justified their dreams, provided a rationale for their thoughts, and fed their ambitions? These are the structures which, universal and silent as the earth itself, feed our human roots.

As early at 1578 as many as 150 French ships visited the eastern shores of North America to fish and trade with Native Americans. As vessels pushed inland, trade expanded. The French were geographically and culturally speaking in the midst of the inter-tribal trade routes, for along the Saint Lawrence and later along the Great Lakes they met northern Native Americans who were mainly hunters, and southern native Americans who were mainly agriculturalists. From the outset, the French faced the diplomatic realities arising from the presence of numerous tribes along a very expansive geographical east-west zone extending half way across North America. Cultural and geographical realities in North America along the forty-second parallel coupled with French social structures and policies established in New France shaped the early Franco-American, or French-American character. Few farmers came to New France to settle before the 1660s and so France's relationship was mainly a trade relationship. Moreover, since trade was expensive because so many posts had to be set up along lengthy inland and water routes, control and monopoly practices were encouraged so that competition would not destroy profits.[3]

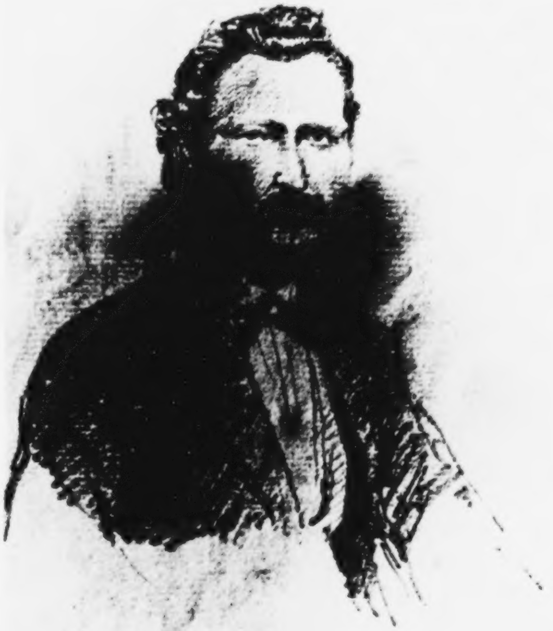
Policies regarding settlement of the land in Quebec were slow to come, and once property ownership became a reality for French immigrants, a small population base plus little chance for exports left farming a discouraging venture. The most exciting assistance the French government did in regard to populating



*A romantic oil painting by J.N. Marchand shows Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony (which he named for his patron saint), in 1680. The other figure is presumably Auguelle, his companion (Minnesota Historical Society).*

the heart of New France occurred in the 1660s when soldiers and women were recruited to come to the newly recognized colony. This represented a direct subsidy, and without it the population of New France would never have grown significantly. But since agriculture could not develop internal or external markets, members of families were forced to work out, and many men participated in the fur trade. Westward expansion gave rise to such social types as the *voyageur, coureur de bois, engagé,* and *hivernant* on one social level, and on another the *bourgeois*. While on the home front, the descendants of French peasants who now became land owners disdained peasant status and took on the term of *habitant*, one who lives on land he owns.

During the period up to 1760 New France possessed all the classes of people common to Western societies. After 1760, however, merchants, governors and political leaders lost their businesses or positions, and the inhabitants of New France were left with mainly a single class society. It was the *voyageur* who was the most recruited by the outside merchant class which came to Montreal after 1760. They were facilitators like before, but now like the *habitant* the *voyageur* was controlled by political forces outside his cultural group.

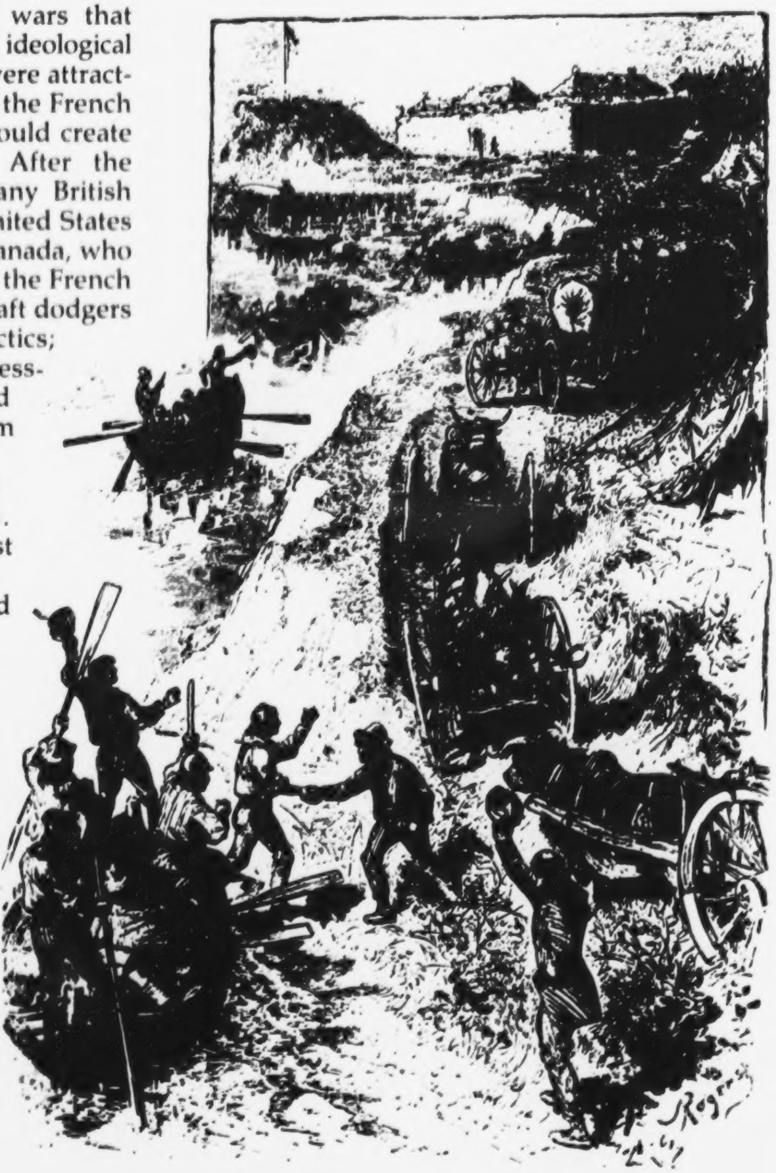


*Louis Riel was hanged for treason a hundred years ago after the collapse of his second rebellion on behalf of métis rights. Today, however, his statue stands on the grounds of the provincial capitol buildings in Winnipeg (Public Archives of Canada).*

Because progress was seen to be first, claim to North America, and secondly, defense of it, success/failure, superiority/inferiority, guilt/ambition, isolation/expansion all became parts of national heritages depending on whether one's race had won or lost the battle.[4]

Perhaps more than anything else the loss of 1760 and the way the loss has been perceived are responsible for the "quiet" and seemingly "reflexive" qualities of the heritage of the French in North America. From the 1760s to the 1820s the French in North America were cut off from any intellectual and general contact with France. On the other hand, the Quebec Act of 1774 gave special status to French Canadians among British subjects in North America so that when they were asked to join the revolution of the Thirteen Colonies to the south they refused, preferring not to risk their freedom of religion and language. In like manner, they refused to be inducted into the ideological wars that preceded the American Revolution, ideological and philosophical debates which were attracting an ever-growing percentage of the French population of France until they would create their own revolution in 1789. After the American Revolution of 1776, many British Royalists fled the newly created United States to settle in Canada. The French of Canada, who could now be seen as distinct from the French of France, were acting like quiet draft dodgers from political-nation-building tactics; now joined by fleeing loyalists professing allegiance to England, coupled with French-Canadian Catholicism and the French language, must have made in adolescent Canada for bewildered looking compatriots. Nonetheless, the westward thrust of Canadian expansion along the Great Lakes had been determined from earlier times, and so it continued in direct economic and political competition with the newly created United States. But French-Canadian participation in the North American experiment now took the forms of political quietism and common labor on the land and along the waterways. As a people, French Canadians had not as yet begun to regain political and economic controls which we have come to view as so important today. Their position is certainly reflexive when felt from the inside, yet "quiet" when viewed from the outside.[5]

Most of the French in North America today are of French-Canadian heritage. They are the descendants of the 100,000 or so French who inhabited New France in 1760. Yet, French heritage in North America today is anything but uniform. In Canada there are the Quebecers and the Acadians in the east, and the French Canadians of the west, whose histories are all closely related to their provinces. In the United States there are the New England French, the Louisiana French, and the French of the Midwest. Besides, there are many French in the United States whose heritage is not part



*Harper's New Monthly Magazine* published this sketch by roving artist W.A. Rogers in its issue of June 1879. It is titled "Meeting of Boats and Trains (of ox carts) on Red River." (Minnesota Historical Society).

Canadian. They represent those individuals and groups who have come directly to the United States from the countries of Belgium, France, Haiti, Switzerland, and others. There are the Huguenots, who originally came for religious freedom; the Icarians, who set up ideal societies; and the many individuals who sought their fortune – individuals who were fascinated by the idea of the West, seekers of gold, travelers, writers, philosophers, researchers, business people, cartographers, botanists, politicians and others. By and large the different groups remained distinct from one another.[6]

By the 1860s when French Canadians began to leave Quebec in large numbers in search of jobs and land, they represented a French group distinct from the many others who were living in North America. And when they arrived in Minnesota to make land claims, it is apparent that they were a group distinct from the French and Indian people who had long preceded them to this area.

From early days the French had married into Indian tribes. In the Northwest the descendants of French fathers and Indian mothers were especially numerous, because white women did not come to this region until about 160 years ago. French and Indian people known as Métis represented in human form the realities of over two hundred years of contact between native Americans and whites in North America. But as settlement practices intensified and Western systems of land acquisition were established, the Métis witnessed as did all native Americans the fragmentation of their land base and their communal practices.[7]

Even within the settlements such as Red River at present day Winnipeg, where settlement had been slow ever since 1812, the arrival of more and more whites caused serious class, racial, and gender upheaval. What happened is comparable to a social landslide. Upper class managers from Hudson Bay, or officers and government officials in newly organized territories of our area introduced new values and national formulas that were soon imitated and then protected. White women of Eastern and European culture arrived, and all people of color were placed in racially competitive roles. All this occurred within the framework of opposition between the value systems of so-called nomadic and sedentary peoples. The new economics became more a matter of intensified agricultural production coupled with possibilities of large demand. Transportation on a large scale became the means of accomplishing national unity for both Canada and the United States. Trains and boats hauled in merchandise, settlers and workers, and the fur trade, which had depended on a special relationship to the land, came to an end. Some individual trappers and traders joined the ranks of guides, soldiers, entrepreneurs, and farmers, but by the 1870s the Métis, who had been considered for generations as "the people between," now became marginal.[8]

The period of agricultural settlement in the Midwest offers many examples of class and racial maneuvering that give insights to our French-American heritage. Statements such as the following were common among many immigrants who came to make land claims. This one was originally written in French in 1883 and is part of a twenty-two page pamphlet printed at Crookston, Minnesota. It was intended to inform French Canadians who might be considering the Red River Valley as a place to settle. "In conclusion (of my testimonial), I am convinced that a farmer who acts carefully, saves his money, and can make wise decisions, no matter what small amount of cash he may have at the outset, will succeed. There are all around here hundreds of examples of young people who began with nothing, but are worth several thousands today."

The *Description de la Colonie du Comté de Polk* by un Comité de Canadiens-Francais is one of the richest documents there is regarding French settlement history in our area. In a most unconscious manner the language of this text reveals the feelings the French Canadians had about their social and economic condition in the past and present, while it also suggests their future expectations. Dozens of times we read in this brief document the word *place* such as "to find a place," "make a place," *place* as a "piece of land," a "home," and "to place oneself" as in the sense of taking advantage of a situation. The testimonials reveal in many ways the changing meaning of words. One could now "persevere," "make decisions," be "courageous" and "get someplace," so to speak. But these new meanings of old words are simply examples of how social transition reveals itself. In this case, by careful study of language we can gain insight into the dynamics of the settlement period, which like all other periods is a construction made from a complex relationship between the past, the present, and the working of the individual and collective will.[9]

What kinds of virtues did our ancestors make out of perseverance, courage, and wise decision making? What do those words mean in historical context? In like manner, what does it mean or why do we proclaim at certain times, "I'm proud to be French!"? One can assume that such statements have histories of their own. They do not just burst out of the present, nor are they to be seen as simple reminders of our past. An intellectual understanding of our ethnic roots is not simply a struggle against forgetting but also a current effort to understand how we are and will be a part of America.

Today we are most likely no more sure of the meaning of our heritage than our ancestors, but we do enjoy a privileged position, for as they were forced to create mainly a material culture which remains as a representation of their lives, we have before us the possibility of creating an intellectual culture and thereby provide a greater understanding of the complex nature of our history and current state because of the leisure time we have gained to reflect, interpret, and enjoy thought-out exchanges.[10]

This conference offers no definite answers. It should, however, raise definite questions regarding the way the French see and have seen themselves in the North American experience. It is indeed a reflexive heritage whose examination offers no comfortable once-and-for-all explanations, for as long as memory is not lost and history not fixed there will be new representations of what the French relationship with North America is, will be, and what it quietly holds in store for those who will speak of it.

Of Acadian descent via a grandfather from Québec and a grandmother who descended from the Dandeneau La Verendrye family, explorers and traders in the 1740s, Virgil Benoit was born and lives in northwestern Minnesota.

He began studying the French Canadians of Minnesota as part of his French language course work at the University of Minnesota and subsequently specialized in that area. Author of articles and reviews in such publications as *The North Dakota Quarterly*, *Plainswoman* and *Journal of Canadian Studies*, he wrote a history, *Gentilly: A French Canadian Community in the Red River Valley*, in 1975. In 1976 he received an award from the National Endowment for the Humanities for his work on the French in North America.

In 1984 at the invitation of the geography department of Laval University in Montreal, Dr. Benoit spoke on the French presence in America at the twenty-fifth Congress of International Geographers in Paris. That same year he also worked on a project sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the North Dakota Council on the Arts to prepare a musical album tracing the evolution of the music of the French-Indian Métis of North Dakota.

Educated at schools in Minnesota, Louisiana, Arkansas, Québec and France, he earned his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and has taught at Colgate University and the University of Vermont. Besides teaching part time at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, Dr. Benoit writes, speaks and participates in community cultural and educational groups.

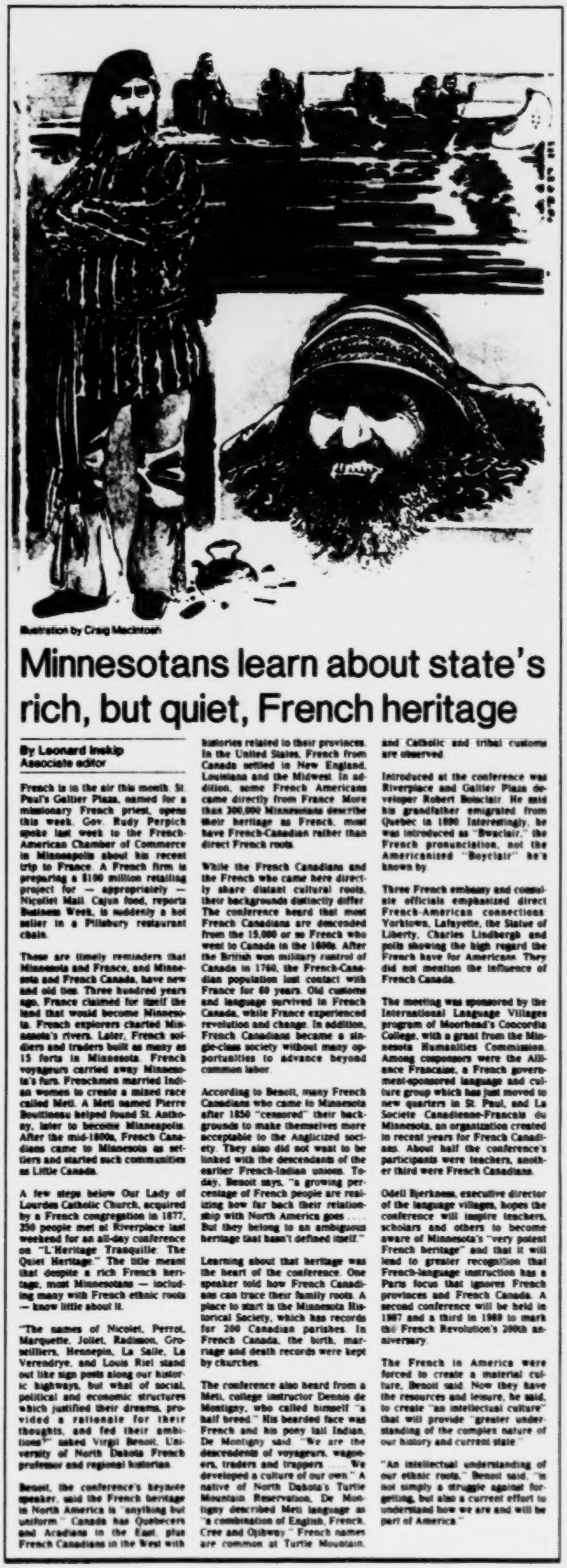


Illustration by Craig Macintosh

## Minnesotans learn about state's rich, but quiet, French heritage

**By Leonard Inskip**
**Associate editor**

French is in the air this month. St. Paul's Galtier Plaza, named for a missionary French priest, opens this week. Gov. Rudy Perpich spoke last week to the French-American Chamber of Commerce in Minneapolis about his recent trip to France. A French firm is preparing a $100 million retailing project for — appropriately — Nicollet Mall. Cajun food, reports Business Week, is suddenly a hot seller in a Pillsbury restaurant chain.

These are timely reminders that Minnesota and France, and Minnesota and French Canada, have new and old ties. Three hundred years ago, France claimed for itself the land that would become Minnesota. French explorers charted Minnesota's rivers. Later, French soldiers and traders built as many as 15 forts in Minnesota. French voyageurs carried away Minnesota's furs. Frenchmen married Indian women to create a mixed race called Meti. A Meti named Pierre Bottineau helped found St. Anthony, later to become Minneapolis. After the mid-1800s, French Canadians came to Minnesota as settlers and started such communities as Little Canada.

A few steps below Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, acquired by a French congregation in 1877, 250 people met at Riverplace last weekend for an all-day conference on "L'Heritage Tranquille: The Quiet Heritage." The title meant that despite a rich French heritage, most Minnesotans — including many with French ethnic roots — know little about it.

"The names of Nicolet, Perrot, Marquette, Joliet, Radisson, Groseilliers, Hennepin, La Salle, La Verendrye, and Louis Riel stand out like sign posts along our historic highways, but what of social, political and economic structures which justified their dreams, provided a rationale for their thoughts, and fed their ambitions?" asked Virgil Benoit, University of North Dakota French professor and regional historian.

Benoit, the conference's keynote speaker, said the French heritage in North America is "anything but uniform." Canada has Quebecers and Acadians in the East, plus French Canadians in the West with histories related to their provinces. In the United States, French from Canada settled in New England, Louisiana and the Midwest. In addition, some French Americans came directly from France. More than 300,000 Minnesotans describe their heritage as French; most have French-Canadian rather than direct French roots.

While the French Canadians and the French who came here directly share distant cultural roots, their backgrounds distinctly differ. The conference heard that most French Canadians are descended from the 15,000 or so French who went to Canada in the 1600s. After the British won military control of Canada in 1760, the French-Canadian population lost contact with France for 60 years. Old customs and language survived in French Canada, while France experienced revolution and change. In addition, French Canadians became a single-class society without many opportunities to advance beyond common labor.

According to Benoit, many French Canadians who came to Minnesota after 1850 "censored" their backgrounds to make themselves more acceptable to the Anglicized society. They also did not want to be linked with the descendants of the earlier French-Indian unions. Today, Benoit says, "a growing percentage of French people are realizing how far back their relationship with North America goes . . . . But they belong to an ambiguous heritage that hasn't defined itself."

Learning about that heritage was the heart of the conference. One speaker told how French Canadians can trace their family roots. A place to start is the Minnesota Historical Society, which has records for 200 Canadian parishes. In French Canada, the birth, marriage and death records were kept by churches.

The conference also heard from a Meti, college instructor Dennis de Montigny, who called himself "a half breed." His bearded face was French and his pony tail Indian. De Montigny said: "We are the descendents of voyageurs, wagoners, traders and trappers . . . . We developed a culture of our own." A native of North Dakota's Turtle Mountain Reservation, De Montigny described Meti language as "a combination of English, French, Cree and Ojibway." French names are common at Turtle Mountain, and Catholic and tribal customs are observed.

Introduced at the conference was Riverplace and Galtier Plaza developer Robert Boisclair. He said his grandfather emigrated from Quebec in 1880. Interestingly, he was introduced as "Bwaclair," the French pronunciation, not the Americanized "Boyclair" he's known by.

Three French embassy and consulate officials emphasized direct French-American connections: Yorktown, Lafayette, the Statue of Liberty, Charles Lindbergh and polls showing the high regard the French have for Americans. They did not mention the influence of French Canada.

The meeting was sponsored by the International Language Villages program of Moorhead's Concordia College, with a grant from the Minnesota Humanities Commission. Among cosponsors were the Alliance Francaise, a French government-sponsored language and culture group which has just moved to new quarters in St. Paul, and La Societe Canadienne-Francais du Minnesota, an organization created in recent years for French Canadians. About half the conference's participants were teachers, another third were French Canadians.

Odell Bjerkness, executive director of the language villages, hopes the conference will inspire teachers, scholars and others to become aware of Minnesota's "very potent French heritage" and that it will lead to greater recognition that French-language instruction has a Paris focus that ignores French provinces and French Canada. A second conference will be held in 1987 and a third in 1989 to mark the French Revolution's 200th anniversary.

The French in America were forced to create a material culture, Benoit said. Now they have the resources and leisure, he said, to create "an intellectual culture" that will provide "greater understanding of the complex nature of our history and current state."

"An intellectual understanding of our ethnic roots," Benoit said, "is not simply a struggle against forgetting, but also a current effort to understand how we are and will be part of America."

*The Minneapolis "Quiet Heritage" conference was well attended and received generous publicity. This article was printed in the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune on the day following the conference, November 10, 1985.*

## Notes

[1] "Representations," a scholarly review published quarterly by the University of California Press, Berkeley, is based on the idea of representation as an interaction of different times with the past.

[2] See especially "Roots of the American Family: From Noah to Now" by Francis L. K Hsu in *Kin and Communities, Families in America*, Edited by Allan J. Lichtman and Joan R. Challinor (Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1979).

[3] Dunham, Douglas. "The French Element in the American Fur Trade, 1760-1816," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1950, p. 2.

[4] For the importance of the *habitants* after 1760 and the nature of the Conquest see: Marcel Rioux, *La Question du Québec* (Editions Seghers, Paris, 1971).

[5] For more information regarding the unusual nature of the Quebec Act see: Lionel Groulx, *Histoire du Canada français depuis la découverte*. Tome II. (Fides, Montreal, 1960).

[6] For clear distinctions regarding the origin of different French groups and where they located in Minnesota see: "The French Canadians and the French" by Sarah P. Rubenstein in *They Chose Minnesota, A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, edited by June Drenning Holmquist (Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, 1981).

[7] Giraud, Marcel. *Le Métis canadien: Son rôle dans l'histoire des provinces de l'Ouest*. (Institut d'éthnologie, Paris, 1945).

[8] Van Kirk, Sylvia. Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1973).

Pannekoek, Frits. "The Churches and the Social Structure in the Red River Area, 1818-1870." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Queens University, Ontario, 1973.

[9] Translations made from the *Description de la Colonie du Comte de Polk par un Comite de Canadiens-Francais*, Crookston, 1883 are my own.

For statistics regarding the high percentage of those who did not "persevere" see: "Gentilly: A French-Canadian Community in the Minnesota Red River Valley," in *Minnesota History*, 44/8, p. 278-289.

[10] Held, David. *Introduction to Critical Theory, Horkheimer to Habermas* (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980).

# The French Voyageur and the Fur Trade

by John T. Rivard

(The following is the live presentation the author made at the *L'Héritage Tranquille* Conference. Picture a voyageur costumed with feathers in his cap, a deerskin jacket, a sash and moccasins, waving his paddle and singing rhythmically as he enters.)

*C'est l'aviron qui nous mène, qui nous mène,*
*C'est l'aviron qui nous mène en haut.*
*M'en revenant de la jolie Rochelle*[2]
*J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles.*
*C'est l'aviron . . .*
*J'ai recontré trois jolies demoiselles;*[2]
*J'ai point choisi, mais j'ai pris la plus belle.*

TRANSLATION

It's the paddle that takes us, that takes us,
It's the paddle that takes us up there.
Returning from beautiful Rochelle,[2]
I met three pretty maidens.
It's the paddle . . .
I met three pretty maidens.[2]
I didn't choose, but I took the prettiest.
It's the paddle . . .

His voice ringing and resounding over the waters, the French Canadian *voyageur* paddled his birchbark canoe over all the rivers and lakes of North America from the 1600s to the middle of the 1800s. The voyageurs opened the entire continent to the white people. As a result, two great countries were born – Canada and the United States.

*Voici, un vrais voyageur, il y a deux cents ans. Mais, n'importe quel voyageur, moi! O non, non! Parmi tous les voyageurs je suis le plus brave, le plus fort, et regardez moi bien – le plus beau!* Oh, some of you do not understand French? Too bad. I said: "Here I am, a real voyageur of 200 years ago. But not just any voyageur me. Oh, no, no! Among all the voyageurs I am the bravest, the strongest, and if you look real close – the most handsome! You know we voyageurs are not the most modest. We are proud of our skill, our bravery, our strength and our wilderness expertise."

Today I will tell you the exciting story of the beginning of the State of Minnesota and the whole Middle West. I will talk about the Indians before the coming of the white people. I will talk about the early explorers, the fur trade and about that rugged, jolly and strong voyageur, who was unique in American history. There was nobody like him before his time, and nobody like him after his time.

It all began with Jacques Cartier, the French explorer. Cartier discovered the St. Lawrence River in 1534, 42 years after Columbus discovered America. He claimed all of Canada for the French crown. However, it took the warring French in Europe 74 years to send colonists to Canada.

In 1608 Samuel Champlain led a small group

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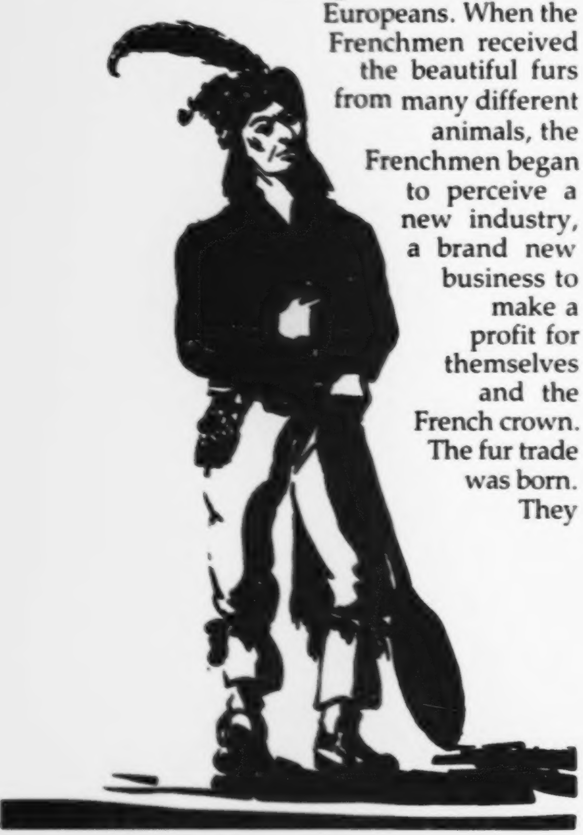
of French colonists to found Quebec. When they approached the site of Quebec in their sailship, they saw many people on shore. Champlain said to his men: "Let us bring presents with us when we go ashore. Those people do not know who we are, and they may do us harm. Our presents will show them we wish them no harm and that we want to be friends." The presents they gave astounded the Indians. For 10,000 years the Indian had lived on this continent without anything made of steel or iron. That means he had nothing manufactured; he had no machines. That means also that the Indian made all his tools and housing with only the substances in nature around him for survival. I will show you later how he employed the natural resources with great skill and knowledge.

The Indian was pleased with these presents. They would make his work easier and life more comfortable. The Frenchmen gave him guns, knives of steel, axes, pots and pans of iron and copper, steel traps, blankets and cloth. The Indians returned the friendship presents with their own presents. They gave the Frenchmen beautiful furs, corn, tobacco, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, pumpkins, blueberries, wild rice, maple syrup and sugar, the birchbark canoe, the toboggan and the snowshoe. In all, the Indians gave the white people 150 new things to eat unknown to Europeans. When the Frenchmen received the beautiful furs from many different animals, the Frenchmen began to perceive a new industry, a brand new business to make a profit for themselves and the French crown. The fur trade was born. They would send to France for manufactured goods that the Indian needed and wanted badly; in return, the Frenchmen would demand furs.



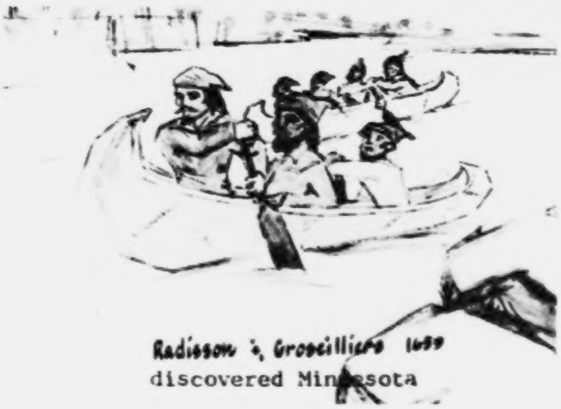
They would ship these furs to France to be sold throughout Europe. The people of Europe in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries desired to be well-groomed, with exotic fur coats and fur hats.

For over 200 years, from the 1600s to the middle of the 1800s, the only industry in the center of the North American continent was the fur trade. The fur trade began to fade out when the loggers and settlers entered Minnesota in the middle of the 1800s.

### The French Explorers

The French began exploring the vast territory of which they knew nothing. The great era of exploration was initiated by Marco Polo when he returned from India and China in 1295. He wrote a book describing the vast treasures of exotic spices, Chinese silk, and precious stones available in the Far East. The Europeans wanted to go to the Far East to bring back ships loaded with these highly desired items, thinking it would make them rich and powerful. Explorers soon discovered that to cross Europe and Asia was too long and dangerous. To go around Africa was also too long and treacherous. Columbus led the way by going west across the Atlantic. He got only as far as the Gulf of Mexico, realizing there were two continents between Europe and China. The explorers who followed him were determined to find a water route across the continents, and thus become even more famous than Columbus. The French began to go up every river thinking anytime now they would be in the Western Sea, and then only a few hundred miles and they would be in China. They did not know that Canada was 3,600 miles wide and filled with mountains and forests. Neither did they know that the Pacific Ocean was 5,000 to 8,000 miles wide. Adventure and fame sped them onward.

Champlain discovered Lake Huron in 1615. No ocean that, so he had to return to Quebec. Etienne Brulé discovered Lake Superior in 1622. Jean Nicolet discovered Lake Michigan in 1634, 100 years after Cartier discovered Canada. When Nicolet approached the end of Green Bay, he saw a large village. Aha, he thought he had arrived. Before landing, he put on a Chinese damask gown covered with birds and flowers: he thought he was in China! He was only in Green Bay, Wisconsin! Like all the others, he returned to Quebec.



Radisson &, Groseilliers 1659
discovered Minnesota

Radisson and Groseilliers are credited with being the first to set foot on Minnesota soil in 1658. Marquette and Joliet discovered the Mississippi River, but they also found that the river emptied into the Gulf of Mexico, a part of the Atlantic. They made their famous discovery in 1673. In 1680 Father Louis Hennepin discovered St. Anthony Falls at Minneapolis. He was captured by the Sioux and held prisoner at Mille Lacs Lake. Du Lhut, who was on Lake Superior, went to his rescue that same year. LaVerendrye explored as far as Lake of the Woods in 1732.

All the explorers returning to Montreal and Quebec told fabulous stories of the Indians and the furs given them by the Indians around the Great Lakes. They related: "There are thousands of Indians out there. We saw millions of fur-bearing animals running in the woods and swimming in the rivers. Look here at these wonderful furs we obtained by trading our supplies with the Indians."

## The Fur Companies

The French began organizing fur companies before 1700. Franchises and licenses were issued by the governor in the name of the King of France. The Hudson Bay Company was chartered by the King of England in 1670. It operated west and north of the French companies with whom it was in competition. After 1760, when the English conquered Canada, the companies were licensed by the English government, but they hired French voyageurs to do the transportation.

The companies hired men to travel and manage the fur posts in the West. The *bourgeois* were the owners and partners. The *commis* were the clerks who managed the posts. The *voyageur* was the canoeman, the camper, the cook, and the guide as well as the builder of the posts. He did all the heavy work. He signed a contract to work for one or more years, usually three years. The voyageur was a very loyal fellow. When he gave his word, it was as good as gold. There were very few instances of reneging or quitting. He was paid about $400 for a year's work, a bit more than working on a farm, whence most of them came. He was sometimes called an *engagé*, or one who is contracted.

*Coureur de bois* was a term used to designate the men who traded with the Indians on their own without government sanction or license. They were courageous Frenchmen who struck out secretly to make money without the bother of red tape and taxes. They were black market wheelers and dealers who when caught were punished. The voyageurs were approved and legitimate persons respected by all.

*Rivard as a* Coureur de Bois *in an Indian canoe.*

## The Trip West

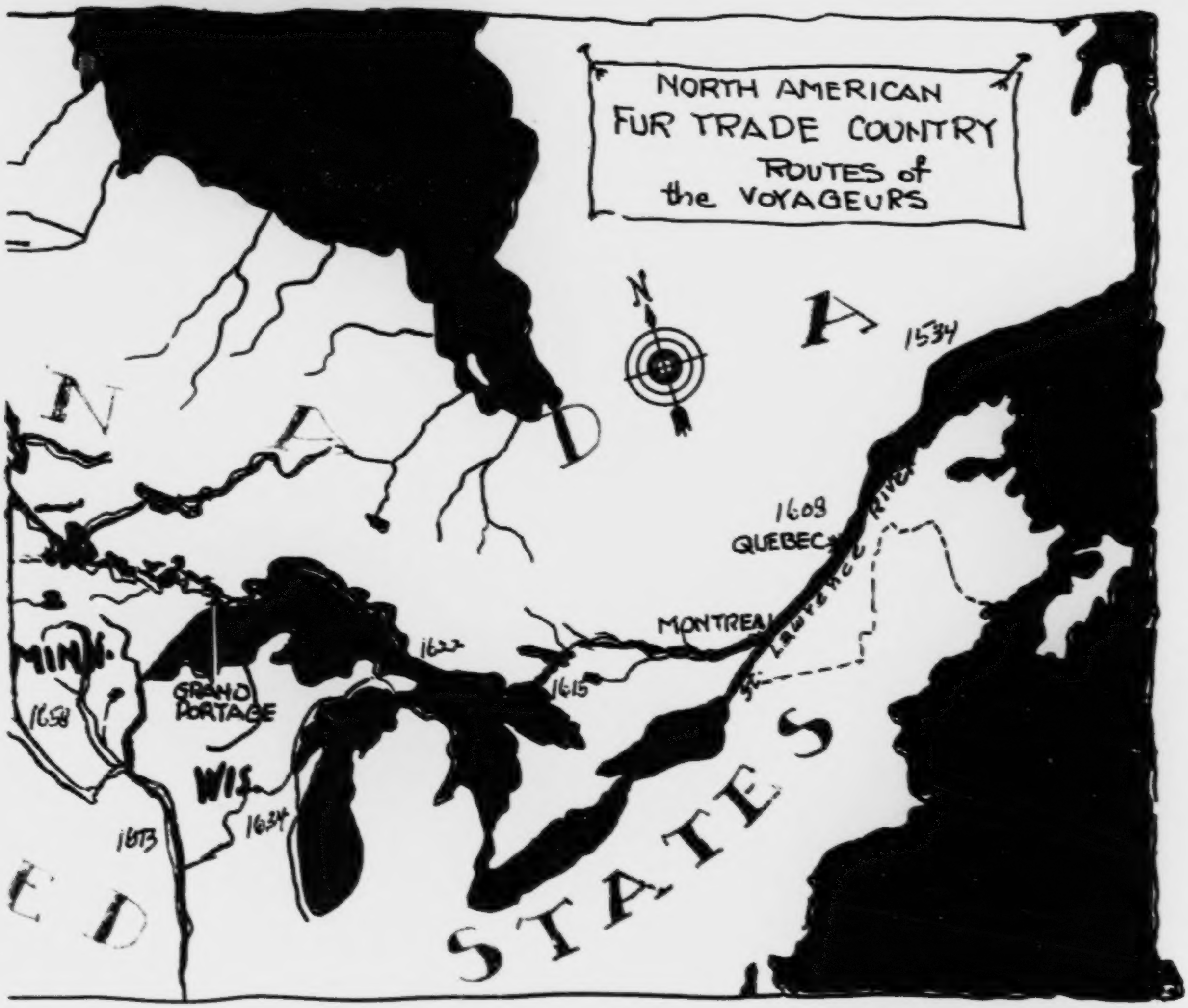
As soon as the rivers were free of ice in early April, the voyageurs loaded their canoes for the long trip west. They had learned from the Indians not only how to survive in the wilderness but also how to build and repair birchbark canoes. They knew how to find their way in unknown territory and also how to run the rapids and survive with very little for months at a time. Like the Indians they obtained white cedar to make the frame of the canoe. White cedar is the lightest wood in the forest. They covered the frame with birchbark, which is very pliable when filled with sap. Having no nails or screws, they used the root of the spruce tree to bind and lash the canoe together. Pine pitch was boiled, made runny like glue, and then applied to the seams of the canoe to make it watertight. The Indians had no oil or tar before 1859, when oil was first discovered in Pennsylvania.

## The Montreal or Master Canoe

The Indian canoe was 18 feet at the longest. Knowing that it would take all summer to travel to the West, the voyageur was obliged to make a much longer canoe in order to carry more goods and thus make the trip of two years or more profitable. He made the Montreal or master canoe. This canoe was 38 to 40 feet long. Now he could carry 6,000 to 8,000 pounds of goods or furs. It took 12 to 14 voyageurs to paddle this big, clumsy canoe.

If you have been in a canoe, you know it is quite easily tipped and capsized. Loading a canoe with tons of goods is even more difficult to achieve. All the cargo consisted of packs wrapped and well-tied for the long journey. Suppose one pack weighs 150 pounds and is placed on one side. The next pack weighs only 50 pounds and is placed on the other side. The

*A Montreal or Master canoe.*


NORTH AMERICAN
FUR TRADE COUNTRY
ROUTES of
the VOYAGEURS
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canoe will tip over. In the warehouses along the river in Montreal there were scales, so as soon as the pack reached 90 pounds, they said: "Wrap it up, tie it up." Now it is ready for loading. Well, if every pack weighs 90 pounds, it is easy to load a canoe. Place 250 packs on one side and 250 on the other, and the canoe will remain level.

At the crack of dawn in early April, the voyageurs jumped in their canoes and paddled as fast as they could all day until sunset. They paddled 60 to 70 strokes a minute because they wanted to arrive in Minnesota before November. It took most of the summer to paddle almost 2,000 miles, and they quickly discovered that it was very difficult to paddle on the ice!

At sunset they stopped in some bay or on an island, partially unloaded the canoe, and prepared their supper. When paddling the rivers, they ate only two meals – supper and breakfast. They would build a fire and cook their pea soup laced with salt pork in a large kettle for several hours. Dried peas and salt pork kept in any kind of weather. Vegetables and meat would have easily spoiled in hot weather. Because of the salt pork, the voyageurs paddling between Montreal and the ends of the Great Lakes were called *mangeurs de porc*, pork eaters. The voyageurs paddling the rivers farther west were called nor'westers or *hivernants*, wintering men.

After a good meal with a little rum, they

*Voyageurs lived on pea soup laced with salt pork.*

slept for a few hours, under a canoe if it was raining. At dawn they were in the canoes again, paddling for two hours before they ate their breakfasts in the canoe.

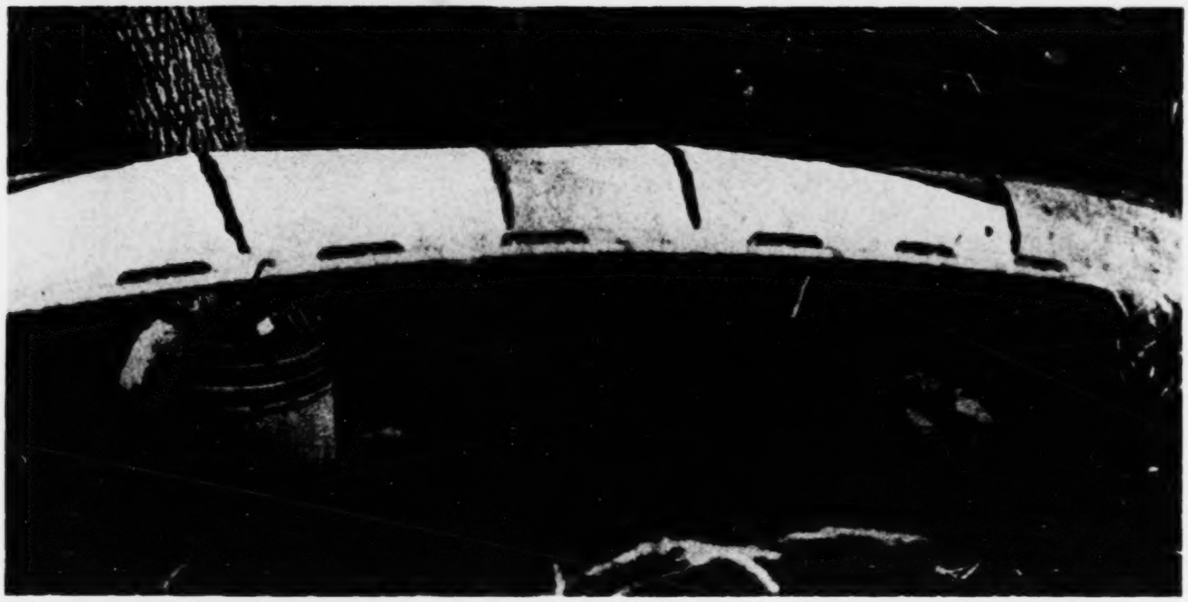
## The Portages

Between Montreal and Minnesota there were 36 full *portages*, a French word meaning "carrying place." A portage occurred when they encountered a falls, shallow rapids and rocks. Some portages were only a few hundred feet long. Some were one mile, some three miles, and the portage on the Pigeon River between Minnesota and Canada at Grand Portage is 8½ miles long. Now comes the hard part of being a voyageur: over 500 packs must be carried around the obstacle on the back of the voyageur, tied with a strap around his forehead.

*Above: One or two men could easily carry an Indian canoe on portage.*

*Left: Rivard demonstrates how voyageurs carried heavy packs on portage.*

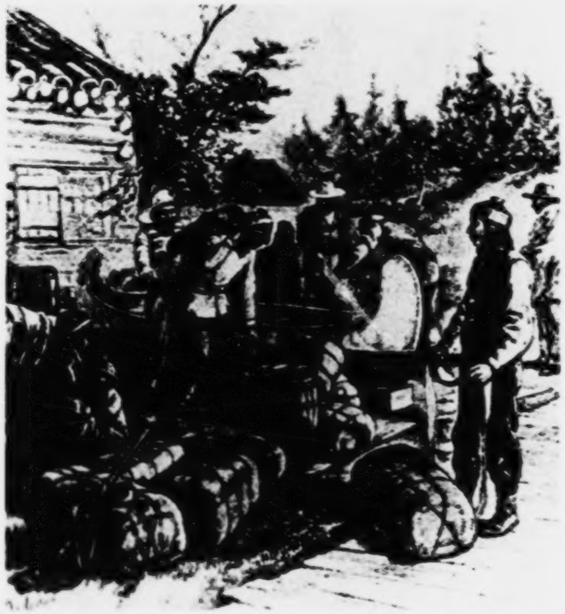
*Below: In wet weather voyageurs slept under their canoes.*



The voyageur was a proud fellow. He was proud of his strength and skill; therefore he would never carry less than what he weighed himself. He never carried less than two packs – 180 pounds. Sometimes he carried three or four packs, and it happened this way. One voyageur would say to a companion: "I can carry three packs from way over there." The other voyageur would reply: "That's nothing. I can carry four." The contest was on. The voyageurs started at the early age of 16 and 17. At that age youngsters are quite competitive, and they love to test their strength and skill against each other.

Let me tell you a story. One day the voyageurs were making a long portage. The leader said to Pierre, a fun-loving voyageur: "Why is it that all the other voyageurs are carrying three packs and you are carrying only one?" Pierre replied: "Monsieur, the leader, you want to know why I carry one and the others carry three packs? I'm going to tell you right now. All the others are too lazy to make three trips!"

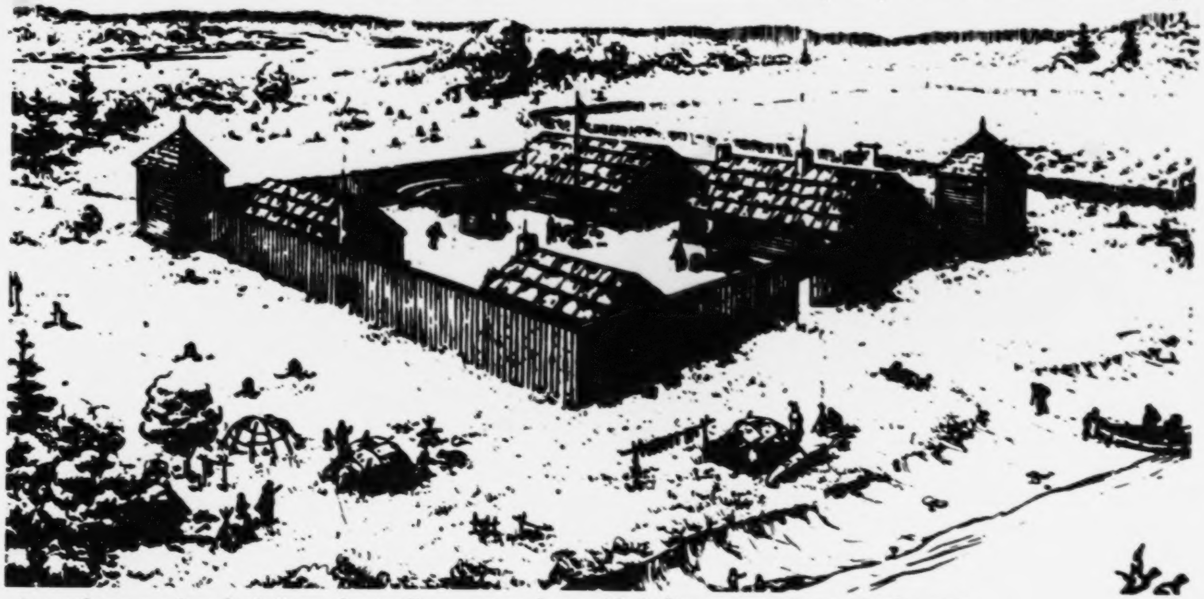
They had to climb steep, rocky trails around the falls or rocks, to water above the falls where they could replace the canoe in the water and paddle on their way. Mosquitoes and black flies were voracious. Six voyageurs went back to fetch the big canoe, which now weighs 400 pounds because it is soaking wet. To avoid a full portage, the voyageurs would often try to pull the canoe through the rushing rapids. They would remain wet the rest of the day. The portage between the St. Louis River and Sandy Lake in northern Minnesota was mud and mire up to the waist, a miserable portage hated by the voyageurs. On the rivers of the interior, the voyageurs used the 25-foot north canoe.



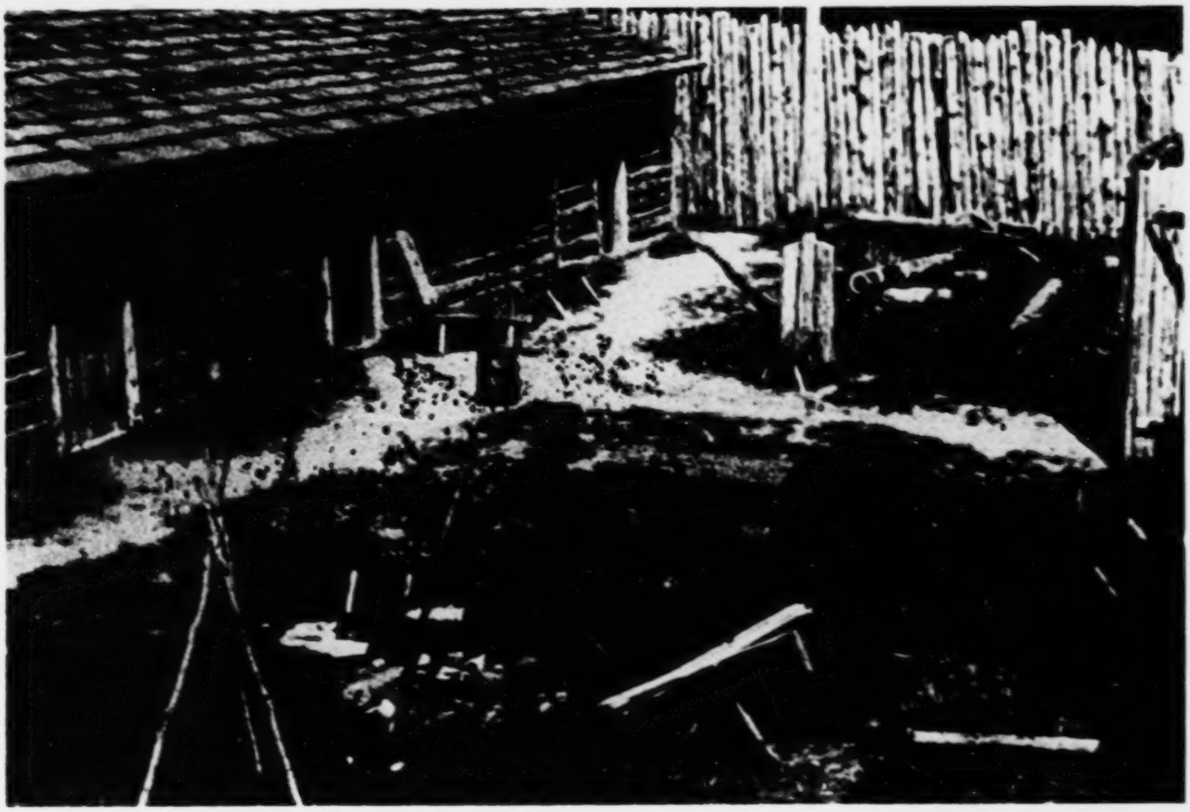
*An early, not-very-realistic engraving of traders, Indians and voyaguers getting ready for a trading expedition.*

## The Fur Trade Post

After arriving in September or October, the voyageurs and clerk would look for Indian villages. Nearby they would build a post. A post 200 years ago was like a little fort. Everything was built with logs; the sawmills came only after 1840. They built a building to store the goods they brought, then a building to keep the furs. They had to have a place to eat and sleep and a store with shelves and counters. Finally they built a stockade with logs



*An early engraving depicting a fur trading post or fort, with Indians camped outside the post.*



*A present-day reproduction of a fur trading post yard.*

10 inches in diameter, placed deep in the ground and 12 feet high, around all the buildings. To keep the Indians out? No, to keep the animals out. Two hundred years ago there were large animals in Minnesota: elk, moose, buffalo that weighed over a ton, bears and wolves by the thousands. There was a lot of food inside and many lives to protect. The voyageurs and fur traders got along very well with the Indians, even intermarrying. The French treated the Indians as equals, persons of value to be respected. There was little fighting or attacks. The Indians became warlike and attacked white people when the whites took their land away and pushed the Indians onto reservations.

## Life and Work of the Indians

In order to fully understand the impact of the fur trade upon the life, work and traditions of the Indian – called "culture shock" – let us briefly show you some tools of the Indian before the advent of steel. The axe was made of stone. The Indian had to chip the stone to make it sharp. He had no steel chisels or hammers. He would use other stones or the antlers of the elk to chisel the rock. Then he made a groove to tie the handle on by rubbing sand with a belt of deerskin. This would take hours of work. He would use the axe to cut down some tall, thin trees to use as poles to make his teepee. After he had his family in a nice, warm teepee, he then wanted to feed his family. He ventured into the woods to bring back some deer meat; deer were quite plentiful. To make the arrowhead he needed a stone that flaked off in small chips to form a pointed and sharp tip. He discovered that the flint stone made good arrowheads. The pointed and feathered arrow was then ready to do its work of providing food for the family. The sharp arrow penetrated the thick, tough hide of the deer. You know, the Indian did not go out and grab the deer by the tail! He had to make the arrow straight. Suppose he made it crooked. He would shoot at the deer, miss it, and hit his grandpa in the derriere!

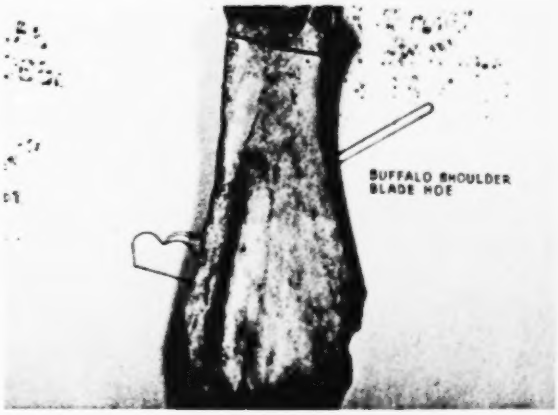
The Indian needed the deer hide. The Indian women were excellent tanners of hides and furs. They would make blankets and coats, then scrape the fur off the remainder with a bone tool, and soften it to make clothes: jackets, dresses, pants, moccasins, straps, laces and pouches. You don't take the hide off a deer with your fingernails: the Indians needed a skinning knife. They obtained a stone, polished it and had a knife. They also needed another kind of knife to cut the animal in pieces to take to their teepees – a hunting knife of stone. Again, hours of chipping.

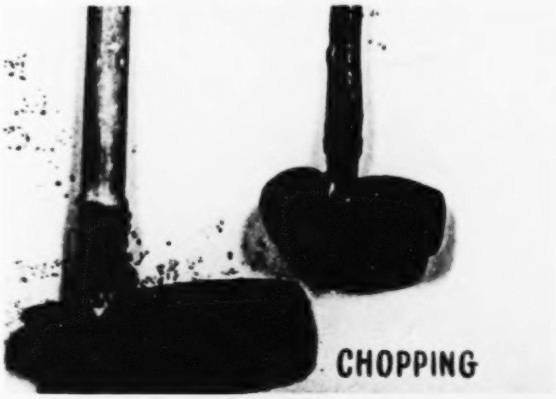
The Indian women took the deer meat, added wild rice, onions and seasoning, and boiled it into a stew. The Indians sat around a large rock or in the teepee and ate off their birchbark plates. Now they needed a table knife to cut the meat and vegetables. They made these also from stone.

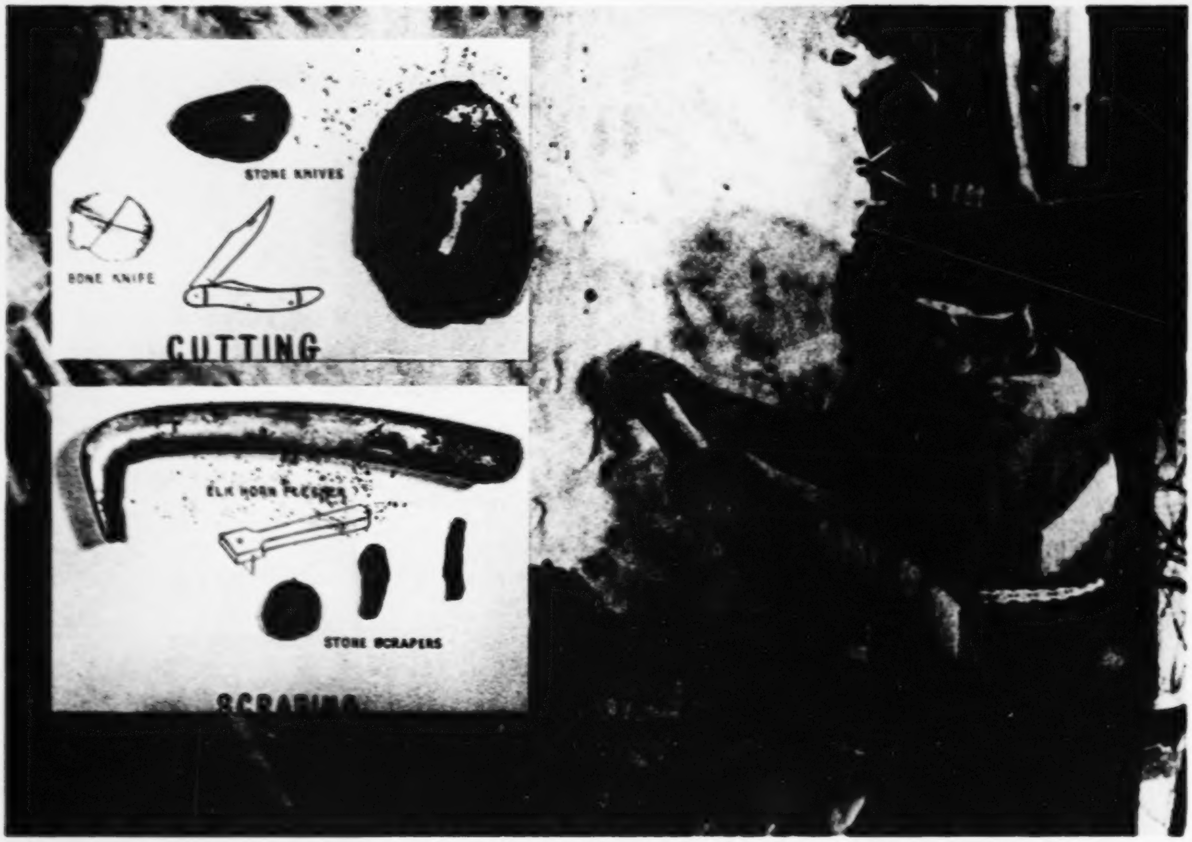
When the women prepared clothes, they did not use small needles and thread from the rushes. The deerskin was too thick and tough. They took a bone from the ankle of the deer, rubbed it on a rock to make it pointed, and used it as an awl to make a series of holes. Then they cut laces from the deerskin and laced the pieces of garment together.

The Indians had large gardens of corn and vegetables. Having no plows of steel or animals to pull the plows, they used the shoulder blade of the buffalo, which has the shape of a hoe. They tied a long handle on it, and then grubbed every inch of the ground to be planted. For a rake they would use the antlers of the deer.

The Indians played many different games, such as lacrosse, also a form of hockey and basketball. On special occasions the parents







*An Indian woman working on a deer hide.*

gave gifts to the children. One such gift was a doll that the girls dressed up with skins and moccasins.

Sometimes a child today thinks: I would like to be like an Indian. All they did was hunt, play, fish and swim. Quite the contrary: the Indian children had to attend school also. The parents, relatives, and neighbors would hold classes to teach the children how to make tools, clothes and teepees. Suppose an Indian child would say: "I will not go to school. That's too hard. I would rather go out and play." That child would soon starve to death, as the child would not know how to make tools to furnish the food.

## The Fur Trade Store

Imagine an Indian coming into a post store for the first time in his life. His eyes would get as large as saucers! He beheld ready-made tools of steel, guns, knives, blankets and colored beads.

What do you think was the first item he wanted? He wanted the steel axe even before the gun. Would that take a big load off his shoulders! Look at how sharp it is! The handle is solid and firm, and he does not have to spend hours making it – it is ready to go. The next

*A flintlock.*

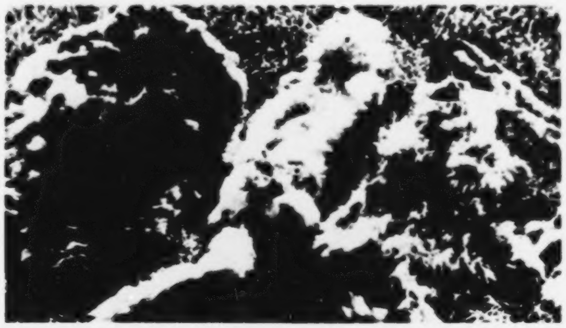
*Flint and steel for fire making.*

*An Indian reaches for the flintlock gun offered by a trader.*

item was the gun. The gun of 200 years ago was not the gun of today with its cartridges and fast trigger. The gun then was the flintlock gun.

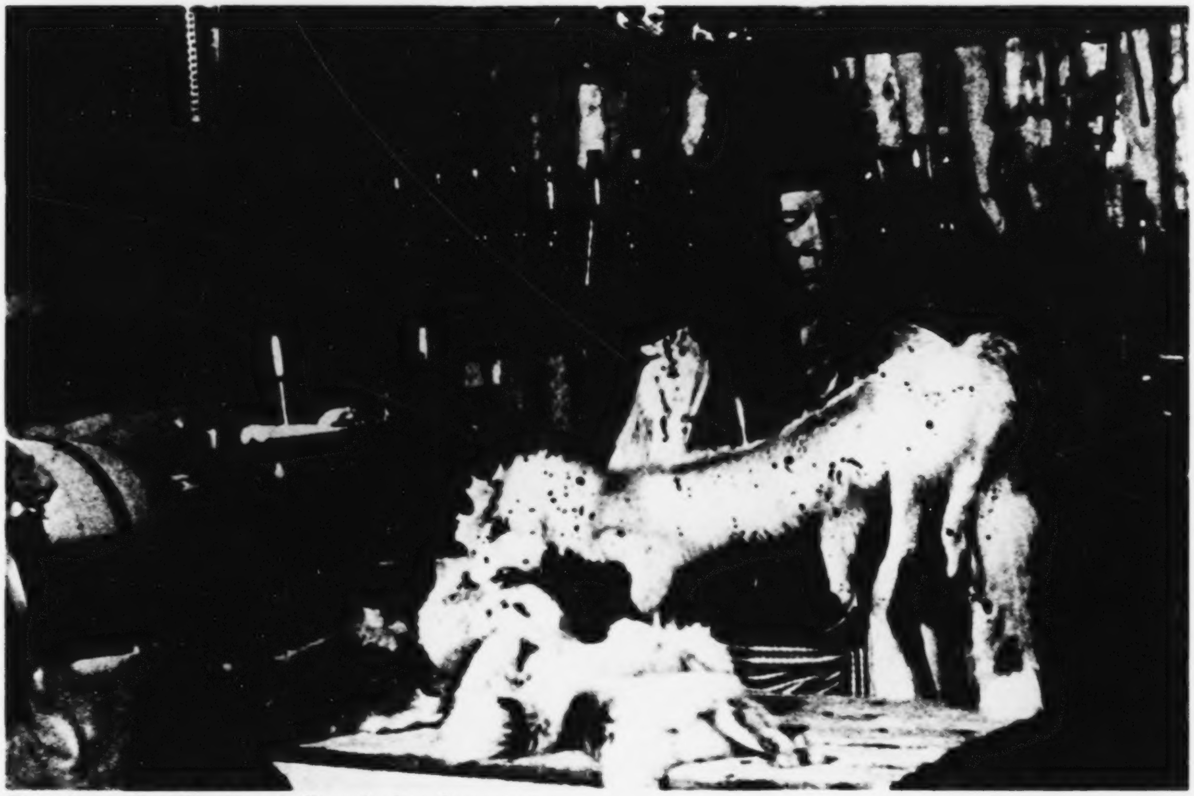
A person carried gunpowder in a horn of the buffalo to keep it dry. He poured a little down the barrel and tamped it down with a ramrod. Then he dropped a lead ball down the barrel and tamped that down. He tamped some wadding of cloth down to form a tight charge. Next he placed a little powder in a trough next to a hole in the barrel near the charge. He pulled back the trigger, which had a piece of flint. When he pulled the trigger, the flint struck steel, and made sparks which fired the gunpowder, first in the trough, then in the barrel. The lead ball was on its way to kill an animal. In those days it was sometimes necessary to be a very good marksman. Suppose you were hunting a bear, and he began to charge you. You better hit him between the eyes on the first shot, because you would not have time to reload.

The next item the Indian desired was a knife of steel. How wonderful for him were the skinning knife, the hunting knife, and the butcher knife. After knives he wanted the steel trap. Before the steel trap the Indian used snares and pits. He covered the pit with brush and placed the bait in the middle. As the animal reached for the bait, it fell in the hole. But the Indian had to be close by to club the animal before it scratched its way out. Now, with 40 or 50 steel traps in the woods and around the swamps, he could catch many animals each



*Beaver skins were valued most, but traders also accepted raccoon, muskrat, marten, wolf and mink.*

BEAVER FASHIONS IN HATS



*Rivard examines furs in a well-stocked trading post.*

day. The more animals, the more furs; the more furs, the more goods at the fur trading post store.

The women wanted iron pots and pans the worst way. Cooking over an open fire or in clay pots was hard work. Now they could have pots and pans of different sizes. They were easy to clean and unbreakable. The women also wanted colored cloth, steel needles and thread. Skins were warm, but hard to clean, and too warm in summer. Cloth was cool and washable.

## The Trading Procedure

When the Indian entered the store, the trader would say: "What would you like for your furs today?" The Indian would reply: "I want gun." The trader would say: "Bring me 15 of your best beaver furs, and I will give you the gun and some powder." If the Indian had only 10 fox furs, he would receive three traps, an axe and a knife. Everything in the store had a value in furs according to their worth and quality. The beaver was the most popular in Europe at that time. The long, tough guard-hairs were clipped to reveal the soft plush underneath. This plush also made the beaver hat a must among the rich. The trader accepted the raccoon, the muskrat, the martin, the wolf and the mink. The voyageur pressed the furs into 90-pound packs. He loaded them in the master canoes, paddled back to Montreal, and turned the furs over to the company. If his contract was not up, he returned to the West for another year of hardship.

## The Jolly Voyageur

The voyageur was an essential element of the fur trade. Without him the fur trade could not function. He was not only rugged, strong, brave and durable, but he was a jolly fun-loving fellow. He loved to sing, dance, jig and tell stories. He knew hundreds of songs and sang them at the slightest provocation. He had to sing, and I'll tell you why. There were 12 to 14 voyageurs in each master canoe. Suppose one paddled slow, another fast, another with deep strokes and another real shallow: the canoe would go down the river like it was intoxicated, from one shore to the other. To make the canoe travel fast and straight, they would sing paddling songs of a great variety. Songs like: *C'est l'aviron, En roulant ma boule, Au près de ma blonde, Allouette, Youpe, Youpe*. . . . All these songs had a good beat to paddle in rhythm. Each song had several verses which told a story of old France or romantic stories of love, courtship, love lost and knights of old.

Around the fire at night, they would be lonesome for family, neighbors and friends they had left behind for three years of loneliness and hardship in the wilds. They loved to sing funny songs, action songs to forget their misery. They would tell stories like this typical voyageur story. One voyaguer says to the other: "You know, back home in Montreal I have fine neighbor. His name is Zephirin, and he is very strong fellow. He is a blacksmith. All day he strikes his steel hammer on his heavy anvil to make the horseshoe, best horseshoe in Montreal. One day he is making the horseshoe when Marie, his girlfriend, comes for a visit in the shop. After while, Zephirin looks around, sees nobody, and says: 'Hey, Marie, can I have a little kiss?' Marie is young girl and very bashful. She gets red in face and finally says: 'All right, one kiss.' Now there is big problem: Zephirin is short like this and Marie is tall like this. After a moment Zephirin gets good idea. He climbs on his anvil and he is just right to give Marie big kiss. After a while Zephirin says: 'Marie, can I walk home with you?' 'All right,' she says. After they walk about three miles, Zephirin says: 'Marie, can I have another kiss?' Marie says: 'No kiss.' Zephirin says: 'No more kiss today?' She says: 'No more kiss today.' Zephirin says: 'Well, if there is no more kiss today, I might just as well drop my anvil.' "

*Rivard as a jigging voyageur.*

*John Rivard in his voyageur costume in front of a freshly caulked log cabin.*

## The Voyageur Costume

The voyageur had a unique manner of dressing. There were the working garments and the dress-up clothes. For nice occasions he wore feathers in his *tuque*, stocking cap. He wore his hair long because it protected his neck from the pesky mosquito and black fly. He wore bright-colored shirts. Around his waist was the *ceinture fléchée*, tassled sash, which was made of hand-woven wool with geometric designs to make it attractive. It also had a function. When his back got tired from paddling, he would tighten up the sash to give his back a little support.

He hung his clay pipe around his neck to keep it from breaking. He loved his pipe and tobacco, which he had learned to enjoy from the Indians. The voyageurs had an unwritten agreement that they would stop the canoe every hour for a pipe break. They would stop the canoe, take out tobacco and pipe, light it up, and smoke for ten minutes. This pipe break was so regular that they would often measure distance by the pipe, in this manner. One voyageur would ask the other: "Pierre, how far from here to Thunder Bay?" Pierre would answer: "Three pipes." The voyageur would know then that the distance was about three hours away.

How did they light their pipes and the fire at night to cook their pea soup? In their *sac à feu*, a moose-hide pouch hanging from the shoulder, they kept the necessities of every day. He drew a flint stone and a piece of steel fitted to the hand. Over dry leaves he would strike the stone to steel, and the sparks would fly, setting the leaves on fire.

The voyageurs wore moccasins made of tough moose hide. Sometimes they wore smaller sashes just underneath the knee to keep the trousers higher and the bugs from crawling up their legs. These sashes were the same design as the big sash.

In the hot days of summer they wore a breech cloth instead of heavy trousers. This left the upper legs open to the breezes. To protect their legs from prickly brush they wore leather leggings. They wore as little as possible in summer paddling on the river. Their trousers were made of a corduroy cloth. In freezing weather they wore a capot, a hooded wool coat made from the Hudson Bay blankets. There were many variations of attire among the voyageurs, as they were rugged individualists like the youth of today.

## Honorary Voyageurs

I was appointed the Official Voyageur for the State of Minnesota by the *Société Canadienne-Française du Minnesota* in 1980. I have the privilege of conferring an honorary title of voyageur upon you today. But to become an honorary voyageur you must sing the official voyageur song with me. I'll sing it in French, then we'll sing it together in English.

*Avance, avance, avance;*
*Recule, recule, recule;*
*Celui qui manquera l'embarcation,*
*N'aura pas'd vin dans son bidon.*

(Translated to rhyme)

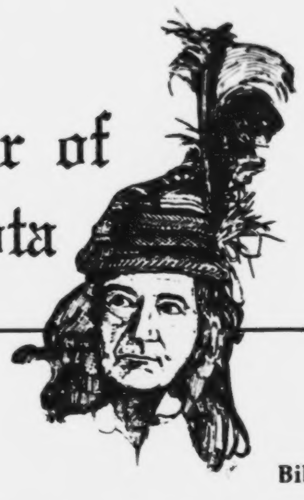
Advance, advance, advance;
Retreat, retreat, retreat;
If you don't paddle, you better look out.
No wine for you, and a bust in the snout.

Make believe we are around a campfire deep in the north woods along a river. Now place both feet on the floor with your hands on your knees. Slap your knees as you sing with me.

Voyageurs, attention!
Right hand in position.
Sing: "Advance, advance . . ."
Voyageurs, attention!
Right hand and left in position.
Sing: "Advance, advance . . ."
Vogageurs: Right hand, left hand,
right foot in position.
Sing: "Advance, advance . . ."
Voyageurs: Right hand, left hand, right foot,
left foot, in position.
"Advance, advance, advance;
Retreat, retreat, retreat;
If you don't paddle, you better look out,
No wine for you, and a bust in the snout."

Now you are all honorary voyageurs!
*Merci beaucoup, mes amis!*

Official
Voyageur of
Minnesota



John T. Rivard was the Northern District manager for the Minnesota Historical Society for several years. He supervised and managed the following sites: the Northwest Fur Post at Pine City, the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, the Charles A. Lindbergh Boyhood Home at Little Falls, the Split Rock Lighthouse, the Oliver Kelley Farm at Elk River and three other sites. Since his retirement in 1978 he has been presenting live historical programs to schools, colleges and civic organizations. His illustrated talks are: The French Voyageur, History of Lumbering, The Native Americans, Charles A. Lindbergh, The Middle East Question, Early Explorers and Settlers, The History of the French-Canadians, and Japan, China and the Orient. He is a graduate of Laval University of Quebec. He resides in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

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# The Assimilation and Acculturation of French Canadians

by Eve E. Gagné

Most Americans once hoped for a "melting pot" society, but the threat of cultural homogeneity, of the "world culture" of which Margaret Mead spoke,[1] has recently led Americans to wonder whether there can be too much assimilation and acculturation; they now fear that many of the traditions and cultures of the past will be permanently lost, and that the United States will be thereby diminished rather than enriched. In order to understand the patterns of assimilation and acculturation of French Canadians in the United States, it is necessary to examine the history of French Canadians, their values, their families, and the communities they formed, while also understanding the social and environmental conditions which they faced. Although most of the discussion will address the assimilation and acculturation of French Canadians in the Midwest, French Canadians who settled in New England will be briefly considered for the sake of comparison.

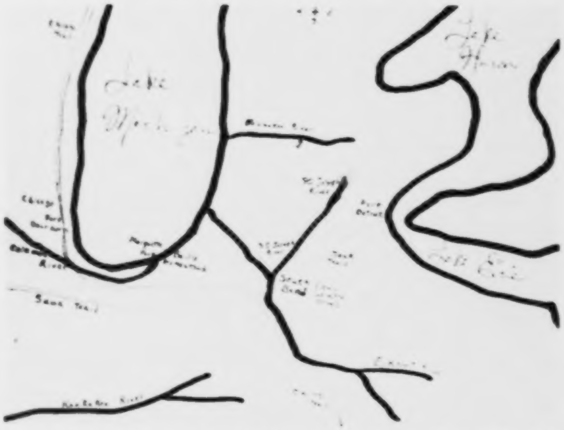
The French Canadians have been survivors, despite a difficult history. Their culture has indeed been a "quiet" one; it is to be hoped that a renewed interest in French Canadian history will lead to an appreciation of that legacy. There are many lessons to be learned from the French Canadian culture; most of those lessons have not been sufficiently examined in the past.

## Settlement Patterns

The first Frenchmen to visit the North American continent were fishermen in the early sixteenth century. Their early contacts with the Indians convinced them that a fortune could be made by exchanging French trinkets for Indian furs. In 1608 Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec, and in 1663 Louis XIV made New France, including all of the American Midwest, a royal colony. The King also awarded monopolies to selected companies, such as the Hundred Associates of the Company of New France.

Most of the Frenchmen who came to New France were impoverished noblemen and peasants, along with Jesuits who possessed a missionary fervor. Large land grants were made to the *Seigneurs*, and the settlers of their lands became known as *habitants*. The *habitants* were expected to farm the land in a manner reminiscent of the feudal manor. However, during the early years the fur trade proved to be far more lucrative than agriculture, and it held greater appeal for the spirited and adventurous Frenchmen. At this time the French government was very centralized, and the laws of New France were often fashioned by men who were thousands of miles away and largely ignorant of the conditions of frontier life; consequently, some men became outlaws, or *couriers de bois*, in order to profitably pursue the fur trade. As laws changed, such men were licensed and became known as *voyageurs*. Some of the early *couriers de bois* may actually have explored the Midwest before the better-known explorers such as Jolliet, since the Reverend Father Marquette reported finding two of the outlaws, who saved his life during his first winter in Illinois, several miles south of what is now Chicago, in 1679.[2]

Despite the difficulties of governing a colony which was so distant from France, the King did often act wisely, as in the case of providing dowries and transportation to New France for *les filles du Roi* (the daughters of the King), who were orphaned young ladies.[3] These young



*Map of the Calumet region from the perspective of French Canadian trappers and traders.*

*Rev. Father Marquette, who accompanied Jolliet in 1673, may have camped in what is now known as Marquette Park in Gary, Indiana.*

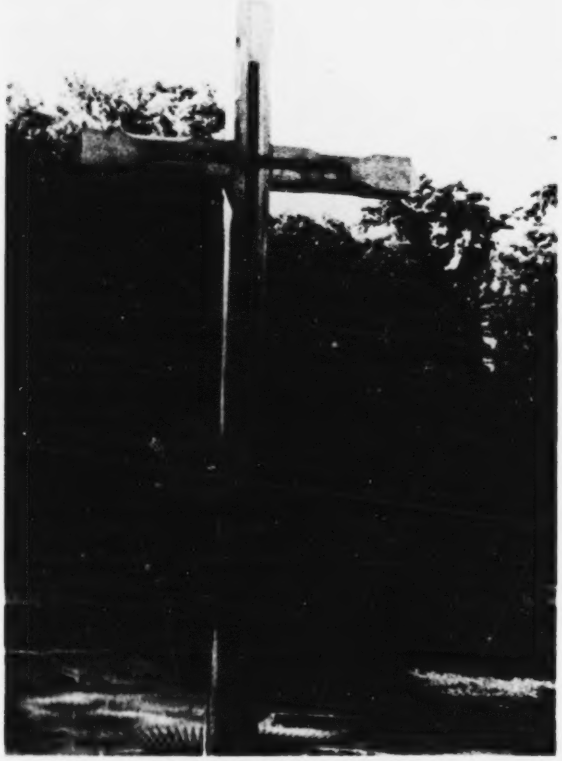
women were sheltered in convents on their arrival in New France until they met the man of their dreams, which appears to have happened quickly. These young women were to play important roles in quickly populating New France with happy, healthy and devout French Canadians.

Louis Jolliet, who was born in Quebec in 1645, was to map the "Father of Waters," the Mississippi, with Marquette, the well-loved Jesuit missionary to the Illinois Indians. The men took care to learn Indian languages before undertaking their journeys, Jolliet learning the Illinois language from a slave of the Ottawa Indians.[4] The French Canadian explorers and their missionary companions were respectful of Indian beliefs and attitudes, while also retaining a sense of humor, which allowed them to impress the Indians without threatening them. For example: Jean Nicolet was searching for the famed China Sea while canoeing along the Menominee River, and seeing nothing but Indians along the shores apparently decided to dispel boredom by dressing in a dramatically beautiful and elaborate Chinese mandarin costume. Arming himself with a pistol in each hand, he jumped ashore, shooting his pistols in the air. Meanwhile, Indians were running in every direction from fear of the god of thunder. Then Nicolet placed gifts on the ground for the Indians, who, much impressed, feasted him and took his advice about forming alliances with the tribes east of them.[5] Similarly, when Radisson wanted to impress the Indians he pretended absentmindedly to throw some of his "French tobacco" into the Indian bonfire; his gunpowder "tobacco" exploded, and his reputation among the Indians was greatly enhanced.[6]

These almost childlike approaches to dealing with the Indians may not have been unlike the Indians' manner of dealing with the French, who were warned that the Midwestern Indians maintained subjugation to the Aztec priesthood, whose messengers on swift ponies arrived in four days from the rainless country, appearing to white men as only strangers in the Indian camps. The Ottawas warned that if the whites went too far beyond the Mississippi the Midwestern Indians might have to kill them, under orders from the Aztec priests.[7]

Prior to 1860 most emigrating French Canadians settled in the Midwest, which was known for its furs, fertile land, and favorable climate. In 1766 William Franklin wrote to his brother Benjamin that the Illinois lands along the Mississippi River were called the "Terrestrial Paradise" by the French Canadians who had settled there.[8] In order to protect themselves and their fur trade, the French Canadians had established small military forts at strategic points. The forts built by the French were primarily outposts, and few of them attracted settlers to the area. The fort in Detroit was one of the exceptions: in 1760 Major Robert Rogers reported that there were 2,000 French in the Detroit area.[9] More typical were the forts in Indiana. In 1769 there were 66 heads of families at Vincennes, along with fifty women and one hundred fifty children. At Fort Ouiatanon, near present-day Lafayette, there were twelve heads of families, and at Fort Miamis, now Fort Wayne, there were only nine.[10]

There were many reasons for the sparse French Canadian settlement in the Midwest. As will be seen, one reason was the relatively small number of French Canadians in the New World, particularly when compared to the vastness of the territories in which they found themselves; it has been estimated that only 10,000 French migrated to New France during the 150 years of French rule.[11] Another reason for the sparse settlement was that French Canadians did not find agriculture attractive, partly because their farming methods remained as they had been in the sixteenth century: they did not use fertilizer, their farming implements



*A wooden cross, first erected by Joseph Bailly, the first white settler of the Calumet area, to mark the grave of his ten-year-old son, who died of typhoid fever, then common in the Midwest.*

*Joseph Bailly, born in Quebec, Canada, in 1774, built his homestead in 1822.*

*Joseph Bailly provided a log cabin such as this one as quarters for the French and Indian men who were needed to conduct the fur trade.*

were antiquated, and individual families farmed relatively narrow strips of land (which were adjacent to neighboring families' strips) to provide equal access to water for the large number of families who lived and worked in close proximity to one another. Narrow strips could not be farmed as economically as the rectangular plots of American farmers. Furthermore, the hourly value of the French Canadian's labor was much higher when he engaged in trapping and trading rather than agriculture.[12]

New France had generated a great improvement in the lives of the French peasants who were brave enough and strong enough to make the voyage, at a time when such an ocean crossing typically meant death for many passengers; a loss of only ten percent was considered to be a very good voyage. In France peasants could not own land, nor hunt, nor fish. In New France they were able to do all of

*The kitchen building, which includes a brick oven and a fireplace, warmed Bailly's sickbed as he awaited his death in 1835.*

these as much as they wished. Investments were difficult to make in those years, and the impoverished nobles required land holdings for prestige and personal security. However, although it was clear to the explorers that the lands of the Midwest were wondrously rich and valuable, the Kings of France were concerned that the outposts of New France were more costly than their meager profits to the Court seemed to warrant.

Despite the concerns of French Canadians with maintaining peace among the Indians, which would preserve the fur trade and ensure their own safety, it must have been clear from the very early years of settlement that the French had far more to fear from the Anglos than from the Indians. From the beginning it must have been apparent to the French that they were only *un petit peuple*, a small population whose strength lay in their alliances with Indian tribes, with the important exception of the Iroquois, who were their mortal enemies. In 1634 there were 4,000 permanent British settlers in Massachusetts, but only 60 French people in all of Canada;[13] in 1666 the first modern-style census found a population of 3,215 persons in New France;[14] and by 1757 the British numbered one-and-a-half million, while there were but seventy thousand French in the New World.[15] However, the small numbers of French Canadians did not reflect the size of their families, since by the year 1748 the population of 55,000 French Canadians was doubling every generation.[16]

The turmoil of the French Revolution brought ten thousand to twenty-five thousand Frenchmen to the United States from 1790 to 1800.[17] Nevertheless, the vast majority of Americans of French heritage owe their beginnings to the French Canadians, for there were only 633,807 immigrants from France to the United States during the entire period of 1820 to 1950.[18] One motive for settlement in the Midwest was that in 1791 the U.S. Congress provided 400 acres to each head of a family who could prove that he had made appropriate improvements.[19] Of the 244 titles granted, 164 went to French inhabitants.[20]

Many inducements were offered to French Canadians to serve in the Civil War, and there was a sixfold increase in French Canadian migration between 1865 to 1869, at a time when the United States needed workers to man its factories and farms. Before the Civil War, most French Canadians settled in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota, but toward the end of the nineteenth century nearly two-thirds of them were settling in New England.[21] Rev. Father Gendreau estimated that in 1873 there were 150,000 French Canadians in the Midwest, of whom 50,000 were scattered, and 200,000 in New England.[22] Since the U.S. census did not initially distinguish between French and Anglo Canadians, the figures are estimates only. By the 1930s there were at least two million French Canadians in the U.S. and three million in Canada.[23]

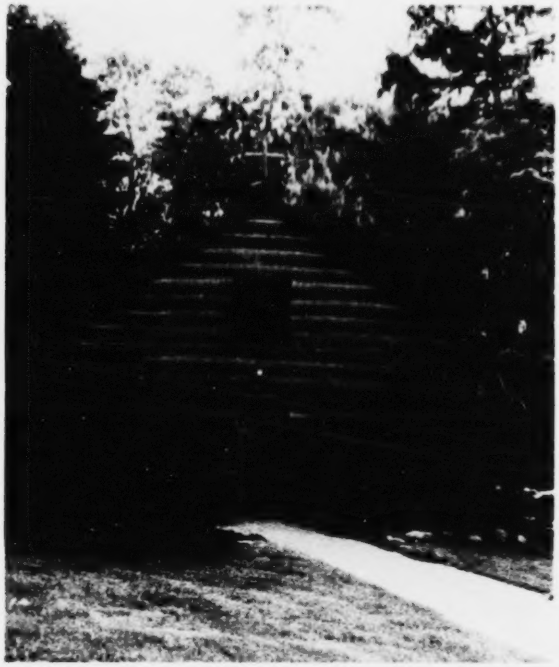
In the middle 1850s there was a decline in the fur industry, and the *voyageurs* and their sons entered the prospering lumber industry, where they continued to sing their songs.[24] Some French Canadians entered mining; for example, there were approximately 800 French Canadians in and around Dubuque, Iowa, in 1836, many of them engaged in lead mining.[25] Concurrently, most of the new French Canadian migration was to New England, where the textile industry was growing by leaps and bounds.

Through the years, both in the Midwest and in New England, French Canadians appear to have moved and settled in clans; the implications of this pattern of migration are many and complex. Some of those implications will not be explored.

## The Plight of French Canadians in the United States

French Canadians have been a cheerful, uncomplaining and hardy group. The early Midwestern French Canadians, primarily traders, trappers, explorers, and missionaries, endured physical privations, dangers, and spiritual sorrows with fortitude and good humor; historians themselves have often forgotten the grave difficulties these men and their families had to overcome. The historian Charles Roll, for example, states that, "The life of the French of the interior of America was thus a rather careless, easy-going, happy-go-lucky one. They danced, they sang, they played cards, they had their marriage celebrations and festivals. . . . But they made little progress along any line. They were merely marking time, awaiting, as it were, the appearance of a more energetic race."[26] Nearly anyone familiar with frontier life is aware that the dangers and privations of such a life require fortitude, endurance and resourcefulness which can be neither "careless" nor "easy-going." For example, a fairly typical's day's rations for the *voyageurs* was a quart of hulled corn and a pint of bear's grease.[27] The frequency of death from fevers, particularly typhoid and typhus, was frequently mentioned by French Canadian frontier priests.[28]

French Canadians began their sometimes marginal participation in American life with two



*The log chapel, 28′ x 29′, first built by Rev. Father Allouez in 1686, on the grounds of what is now Notre Dame University.*

obvious strikes against them, their Catholicism and their French language. The xenophobia of the English-speaking Protestants of the United States did not permit an easy assimilation of the French Canadians in their midst. Nor would the culture and values of French Canadians permit an easy acculturation with the Anglo-Protestant culture.

It is impossible to understand the French Canadian culture and spirit without understanding Catholicism. Whereas Protestants are sufficiently prepared to worship when worshipers gather together to hear the word of God,[29] Catholics have need of a priest to consummate their sacraments. The early reliance on, and affection for, the monarchical hierarchy in secular matters, and the prolonged reliance on church hierarchy for religious salvation provided the French Canadians with a keen awareness of their dependence on others. Although Protestant Americans often showed a preference for individual farms and the resulting social isolation, French Canadians formed religious parishes in small- and medium-sized towns where they would be sufficiently numerous to build a church and retain a priest, while free of the fear of being engulfed in a large Protestant city.

The primary authorities with whom the French Canadians were familiar were paternal figures. The Church provided elegant ceremony, absolution, and the advice of a Father. Authority was perceived as necessary to the scheme of things: it was accepted and even welcomed. Thus evolved the French Canadian lamb, quite incompatible with the American Protestant eagle or the English Protestant lion.

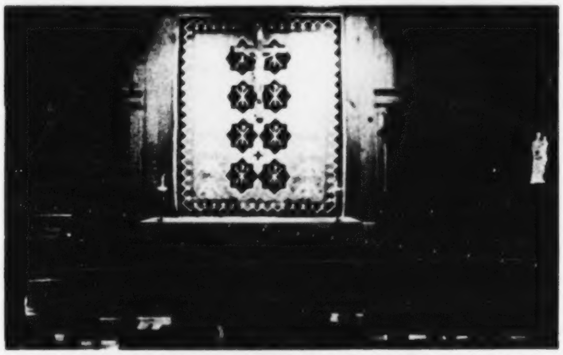
Anglo Americans, with deep concerns regarding religious liberty and other constitutional freedoms, have long regarded European popery – with its emphasis on obedience to hierarchy and its past associations with monarchies – as incompatible with American ideals. In the 1850s the "Know-Nothing" party gave evidence of strong nativist sentiment which was particularly anti-Catholic. One demand of the Know-Nothing party was that Catholics should not be allowed to hold political office since many of the members of that party believed that the "Harlot of Rome" (the pope) was plotting to overthrow the U.S. government. French Canadians were of particular concern to nativists because of their traditionally large families and the resulting fear that they would replace native Protestant Americans.[30] Although French Canadians in New England were the primary targets of nativism, since they were more recent immigrants, the Midwest shared in the problems. In the 1886 Chicago Haymarket Square bloodbath, a peaceful gathering of striking immigrants was encirlced by police and bombed by an unknown person: five Germans and one native American were sentenced to death for the bombing. A few years later, in 1893, the Detroit *Patriotic American* circulated a bogus papal encyclical instructing Catholic Americans to "exterminate all heretics," while in Minneapolis a book was published, and widely read, that warned of seven hundred thousand papal soldiers who were ready to aid in the Catholic uprising – with the result that Midwesterners felt terrorized.[31]

An unpleasant but unavoidable reality for French Canadians is that they are a defeated people. The daring, independence, and openness which characterized them and their culture before the conquest of 1760 is no longer obvious. Prior to the conquest, the French Canadian was a North American man of action, gathering together the wealth of an enormous continent. At that time the French Canadian found acculturation easy: he adopted many Indian customs and points of view, he learned Indian languages, he helped maintain a constructive balance of power between unfriendly Indian tribes, and he was a usually fair and friendly power broker whose concern with both the souls and bodies of men won him the respect and love of many of the Indians who knew him. After the conquest the typically

French preference for thought over action, and private over public lives, largely replaced the characteristically North American preference for action.[32] In defeat French Canadians withdrew into themselves and huddled together in parish life, while trying to preserve their language, customs, and religion as well as they could in their new Protestant environment.

Nowhere is the importance of religion more clearly evidenced between Protestants and Catholics than in material, or worldly, success. Max Weber has noted that the Puritan, whose salvation is a matter of predestination, is never assured of salvation, and he attempts to proclaim his election to the heavenly hosts through successful enterprise and the creation of capital – knowing, at least, that his earthly success has been willed by God or it would not otherwise occur.[33] A very different religious scenario is faced by the Catholic. The Catholic is assured of salvation by strict adherence to the laws of the Church, which preaches the virtues of worldly poverty, humility, and obedience. If there is virtue in poverty, then there is virtue in spending freely, since one will thereby be poor for the morrow. French Canadians have long been known to be generous and free with their acquired wealth; their habit of giving presents endeared them to the Indians and made trade all the more difficult for the British and the Americans. Even French Canadian priests have reprimanded their parishioners for their spendthrift ways.[34] The influence of the Court of King Louis XIV, combined with the faith that God will provide, has lingered long in French Canadian culture. The religious emphasis on humility has made worldly success less than desirable. Nor is humility likely to lead to positions of power and authority. Humility has probably also contributed to the "heroless" past of French Canadians, who have no Daniel Boone to invoke though several French Canadian frontiersmen are probably more meritorious of honor. The Church's emphasis on obedience has helped to make willing employees of French Canadians, but obedience is not conducive to entrepreneurship.

*The Log Chapel, again rebuilt in 1900 after a fire, requires repairs; left to right — Keith Clark, Bob Gray, Mel Swift.*



*Interior of the Log Chapel, rebuilt in 1832 by Rev. Father Badin, first priest to be ordained in the United States, whose remains are buried beneath the chapel.*

Although the French language was probably not as great a barrier to cultural assimilation as was the Catholic religion, the language differences did further isolate French Canadians from mainstream Americans. The Church supported and welcomed the use of the French language in the United States by sending French-speaking priests to the Midwestern frontier; it was hoped that French Canadians would be insulated from their Protestant environment by the French language, thereby preserving their faith. However, just as French Canadian men had few reservations about marrying Indian women, French Canadian women had few reservations about marrying Protestants.[35] The small size of most French Canadian settlements in the Midwest probably made it difficult for single French Canadians to find suitable marital partners within their own ethnic group. However, the French language probably survived some of these mixed marriages. Recent research indicates that wives are more likely to continue using their mother tongue in the home than are their husbands;[36] this may be the result of the greater contact men have with the dominant linquistic group, both socially and vocationally. In any case, assimilation was probably inevitable, particularly in the Midwest, which lacked the chain migration patterns of French Canadians in New England.

As early as 1895 it seemed obvious to St. Pierre, a French Canadian writer, that three-fourths of the French Canadians in Michigan were well on their way to becoming assimilated, since they could now only understand French, no longer being able to speak it, and took as much pride in being Americans as in being French Canadian; St. Pierre also notes that the French Canadians who were dispersed, or not living in French Canadian towns, were almost certain to be completely assimilated.[37] The disappearance of the French-speaking priests from the Midwest by the end of the nineteenth century signaled the final assimilation of French Canadians.[38]

## Lessons from the French Canadians

Although French Canadians had played a pioneering role, their culture has been overwhelmed by that of the Anglo Protestants. It has been suggested that rather than being a melting pot, the United States is a transmuting pot, in which all participants are reformed into the Anglo Saxon ideal.[39] The American "Doctrine of Manifest Destiny," which justified the appropriation of Indian lands as God's will, seems difficult to understand in the late twentieth century, as does the past treatment of American blacks. The French Canadians' attitudes toward both Indians and Blacks were very different from that of the English or the Americans. These differences in attitude often had a religious basis. Although the problems of the New World were often without parallel in the Old World, French Canadians accepted the teachings of the Church of Rome: One of these teachings was that *all* men possess souls, and in that respect, at least, all men were equal in the eyes of Catholics. Indeed, the bishop of Quebec urged priests to treat the "savages" and the French with equal respect and consideration.[40] Several of these priests took the Indians' hardships to heart and accepted the fate of the Indians for themselves. For example, in 1838 Rev. Father Benjamin Petit joined the Potawatomie Indians of his parish in their forced relocation march to the Southwest. Rev. Petit, as well as many of the Indians, died as a result of that march.

The marriage contract was considered to be a sacred union with which a man could not interfere, and although French Canadians were responsible for holding a few slaves (a practice of which the Church strongly disapproved), both Indian and black slaves who had a Catholic marriage could find a route to freedom. Further, in those few instances where French Canadians held slaves, the masters worked in the fields side by side with their slaves. The slaves were also treated courteously, the courtesy of the French being a trait of which most Anglo travelers took notice. In contast, the Protestant Americans were better able to use the dictates of their own consciences in deciding on the appropriate solutions for the problems they faced, including slavery. As a result, a few of them were able to convince themselves and others that blacks had no souls,[41] while most Americans simply interpreted slavery as a secular concern rather than a religious one.

The basic differences between traditional French Canadian culture and the twentieth century American culture are best described by the German words *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*. Modern day American society is characterized by *gesellschaft*, by impersonal, mechanistic, social relationships. Easily available transportation has increased the mobility of Americans, with the result that they are in many ways world citizens, with worldwide concerns. However, most of those concerns are based on media news stories and other second- or third-party reports. Another symptom of an impersonal society is the fact that the complexities of twentieth century life require a wide variety of experts who "act upon" or "fix-up" Americans without ever getting to know them; *e.g.*, many patients never get to talk to their surgeons, even when the operation is not an emergency. American youngsters love celebrities they have seen at a distance, or on television, though those celebrities do not know their audience in a personal way. Americans "know" far more people than they are known by, except for those few Americans who have what is called "name recognition," all of which creates and enhances the *gesellschaft* society. Occasionally, tragedies, such as the African famine, are somewhat personalized by the media, but even then the concern for one's satellite image neighbor lasts only until the world turns to another day; then another concern takes center stage.

Impersonal and mechanistic social relationships made possible the near extinction of the American Indians and the enslavement and abuse of blacks. Although the French Canadian economy depended on Indians, whereas the economy of Americans did not, the French had an attitude toward the Indians which was

*The golden dome of Notre Dame University, established by Rev. Father Sorin, C.S.C., in 1842 for the education of frontier youth, many of whom were French Canadians.*

diametrically opposed to that of the Americans, or that of the English. For example, Cardinal Minister Richelieu decreed early on that the Indians were citizens of France who needed no papers of naturalization to live in France. French Canadians almost never used coercion with the Indians. When they wanted the Indians to take up residence near a fort, they were careful to convince the Indians of the wisdom of the move. Similarly, when the French punished individual Indian offenders, they were careful to explain the reasons for any punitive measures that they might take. French Canadian children played with Indian children, French Canadian men married Indian women, and French Canadian communities were carefully structured to permit as much small-group socialization as possible. The *gemeinschaft* nature of the French Canadian community could not be disputed, and the social relationships were spontaneous and reciprocal. It may be characteristic of French culture to place emphasis on relationships, *la fraternité*, while the American emphasis is often on winning – "Give me liberty, or give me death." Americans were concerned with conquering the Indians, while the French were concerned with winning their souls.

Mechanistic social relationships make narcissism a characteristic of our culture. The resultant superficial relationships have been examined by Christopher Lasch, who notes that "In all his personal relations, the [American] gamesman depends on the admiration or fear he inspires in others to certify his credentials as a 'winner.' "[42] French Canadians have always concerned themselves with the holistic acceptance of others, and of themselves. The French enjoy social relationships and want to understand at the personal level, rather than at the level of impersonal roles.

As Third World countries begin to insist on their fair share of the world's resources, and as our own resources become depleted or polluted, Americans may need to change their attitudes and lifestyles. If so, it is important that we carefully examine alternative lifestyles. French Canadians enjoyed themselves with the simple pleasures of song and dance: they harmed no one, they demanded nothing, they worked to fulfill their responsibilities, they loved one another and gave generously. Such a culture is surely worthy of being remembered, and it is perhaps worthy of being emulated as well.

Eve E. Gagné was born of French Canadian parents in Lewiston, Maine. She earned a B.A. in English literature at Saint Joseph's College, an M.Ed. at the University of Hartford and a Ph.D. in educational psychology at the University of Connecticut. For five years Gagné taught children and youth with a variety of handicapping conditions, for two years she worked as a mental health consultant, and for the past twelve years she has been involved in professional education programs – at the State University of New York in Binghamton for seven years and at Chicago State University for five years. She has also taught classes in multicultural education at Purdue University. Additionally, Gagné has developed adult education courses for nursing homes, and she has gathered oral histories for a local newspaper.

Dr. Gagné is now a Fellow in the Kellogg Foundation interdisciplinary leadership program, under whose auspices she is studying the problems of dependent handicapped elderly. One of her present interests is the impact of ethnicity on the needs, attitudes and values of the elderly. Gagné has published many articles in professional journals, including the *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, the *Child Study Journal*, the *Journal of Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *Academic Therapy*, and the *Journal of Special Education*. Dr. Gagné has also published a book, *School Behavior and School Discipline* (Washington, D.C.,: University Press of America, 1982); the second edition of this book will soon appear with an expanded treatment of the effects of ethnicity on students, parents, teachers and administrators.

Gagné maintains membership in numerous professional organizations, including the American Psychological Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She is also a recent member of the *Association Canado-Américaine* and the *Union Saint-Jean-Baptiste*. She has traveled extensively in the United States, Canada, France, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, the Soviet Union, Puerto Rico and Mexico. One of her most recent interests is the study of empathic responses, especially as these are affected by cultural experiences.

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# History of Our Lady of Lourdes Church

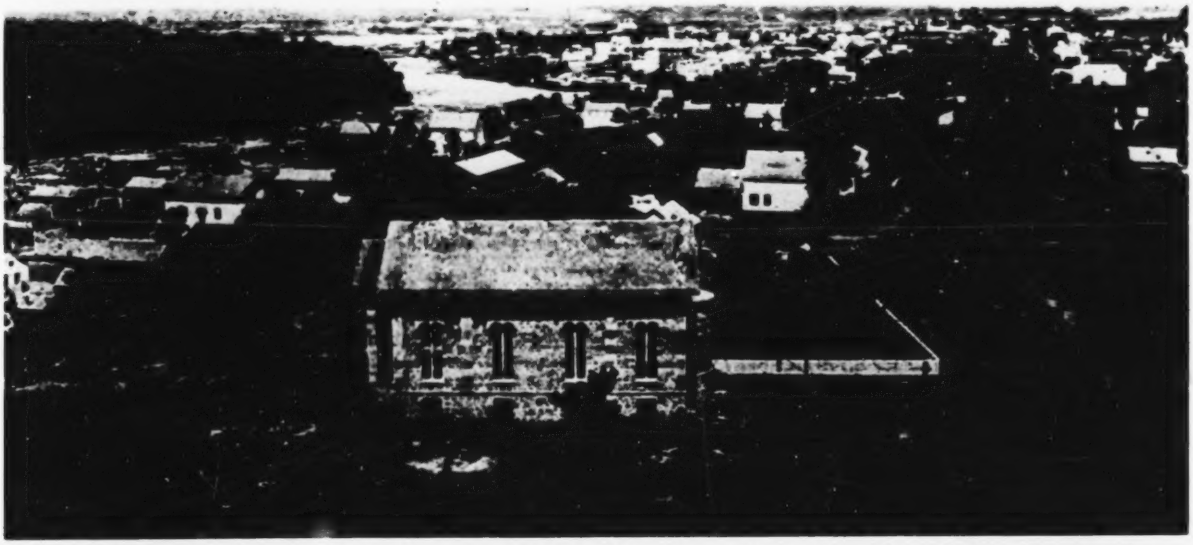
by The Reverend Alan W. Moss

The parish church of Our Lady of Lourdes is the result of an old French saying in Canada: "Lose your language, lose your faith." When I was just a lad, I heard that statement off and on.

Before the city of Minneapolis began, this was the little town of St. Anthony. The original settlers here were French Canadian and mostly Catholic, but there were also people from New England, and you are sitting in a church that represents both cultures. The part of the church from the side door to the wall door was originally the First Universalist Church. From the side door to the priest's quarters behind the sacristy was the French church. The building started out as a Temple of Reason, the first place of worship for the Universalists who came here when Minnesota was just being settled. On the outside you can see the Greek temple design and superimposed on it French provincial architecture; if you look toward the sanctuary area and if you walk around the outside of the church, you can see the sacristy and the priest's quarters, which may remind you of the old French part of New Orleans or many homes in Ottawa or Montreal.

A community grew up on this part of the river in the 1830s and the original French Catholic parish is still in existence; however, it is now known as a French parish – the parish of St. Anthony of Padua. It started out as a church of French Canadians, some Irish Catholics, and a few English Catholics – all three were in the original group. This place did not first start up as a town. As many of you know, the logging industry was a major factor in settlement on this side of the river.

Between the settlement here and Stillwater,



*The First Universalist Church is in the foreground of this 1857 photograph taken from the roof of the Winslow House. East Hennepin is the first horizontal street beyond the church (Minnesota Historical Society: photo by B.F. Upton).*

*Above: Our Lady of Lourdes was an offshoot of the original French Canadian parish of the St. Anthony district. This was the St. Anthony of Padua Church of the 19th century at 804 2nd Street N.E., Minneapolis (Minnesota Historical Society).*

*Right: The St. Anthony of Padua Church at Main and 9th N.E., Minneapolis (Minnesota Historical Society).*

and other little communities where the French settled, we always built a church. And so St. Anthony's church began to have Mass on the land that Pierre Bottineau owned. If you don't know the name "Pierre Bottineau," you should look up your early frontier history. He was a most colorful person and has been much neglected in American history, as colorful an explorer and adventurer as anyone in the United States; his last home is now a museum

***St. Anthony and Minneapolis before the Civil War, when sawmills were the chief industry (Minnesota Historical Society: a B.F. Upton photograph).***

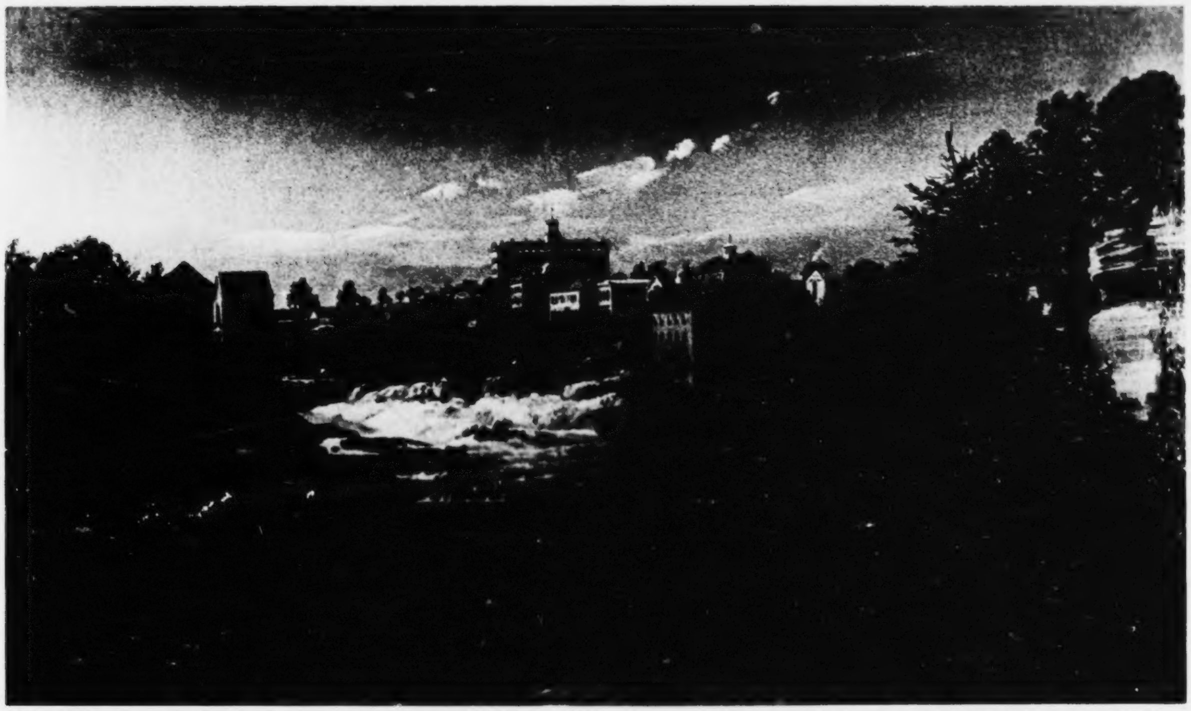
in north Hennepin County. Pierre Bottineau had a little trading post here and owned a good deal of land; in fact, all of the city lots in this whole area are a part of the Pierre Bottineau addition.

It was his land that was subdivided, and he encouraged the first French priests to come here. All of the original clergy in this archdiocese were from France, coming up the Mississippi from Iowa. Father Gautier, Father Ravoux are two names you would probably recognize amongst the earliest French priests serving Minnesota parishes.

If you think that his location was just an ordinary out-of-the-way wilderness place, you must remember that people in 1681 were electrified by what they read. This area was probably as well-known in Europe then as it is today, perhaps better known. People began to realize that there was something very wonderful in this area; as many of you probably know, you can go by water all the way to the Atlantic Ocean from the channel in this river. This was the waterway, the interstate freeway to Quebec City that the explorers used. This was the site of Daniel DuLuth's daring rescue of Father Hennepin and the discovery of the all-water route to the St. Croix River. This is the place the first French people came to buy and sell furs. They knew this area well. Other

*Father Augustin Ravoux, one of the earliest French priests in the area (Minnesota Historical Society).*

*Two portraits of Pierre Bottineau show him as a trader and guide in the years before the Civil War, and as the distinguished elder statesman of the French in Minnesota (Minnesota Historical Society: the portrait of the older man is by Jacoby of Minneapolis).*



*This 1857 oil painting by Ferdinand Reichardt of St. Anthony Falls provides an exalted view of the Winslow House (the original is in the Minnesota Historical Society art collection).*

explorers had talked about the wonderful waterfall, the only one on the Mississippi River. When Father Hennepin saw it – by the way it is down by the present Ford Dam – that falls fell away gradually; at the time of the Civil War they were capped. I was trying to explain this to an esteemed French consul, who was wondering what happened to St. Anthony Falls. They are underneath a capping: and if that hadn't been done, there would be no falls. This is what provided the waterpower and the economic strength that kept the French people here. In 1849, they incorporated the parish of St. Anthony of Padua.

Well, when I started out I said the first thing the French remembered and remembered well wherever they went was, "Don't lose your language, because if you do, you will lose your Catholic faith." What happened is that many of the people they traveled with were not French; many of them came from the Ottawa Valley in Ontario. The problem became clear when the first Irish pastor arrived at St. Anthony. The old French bishop sent along a French assistant; and then, when it changed around – you'll think you're in Canada when you hear this – it was a French pastor and an Irish assistant. Then all things began to crumble when there were two Irish pastors in a row, and then a third. Finally the French assistant decided we had a big enough French population: we needed our language and we needed our culture. So away he went to see the bishop of St. Paul, Bishop Grace.

And now I'll tell you a little-known story that is true. Bishop Grace was getting old; he had worked hard and wanted a successor. He had sent two young vocations who had arrived in his diocese, Father O'Gorman and John Ireland, to France to be educated. They came back and John Ireland became the apple of his eye. He went off to the Civil War as a chaplain and came back when the war ended. He was very, very popular. Bishop Grace felt that the future of the Catholic church in this part of the country rested on the shoulders of young John Ireland.

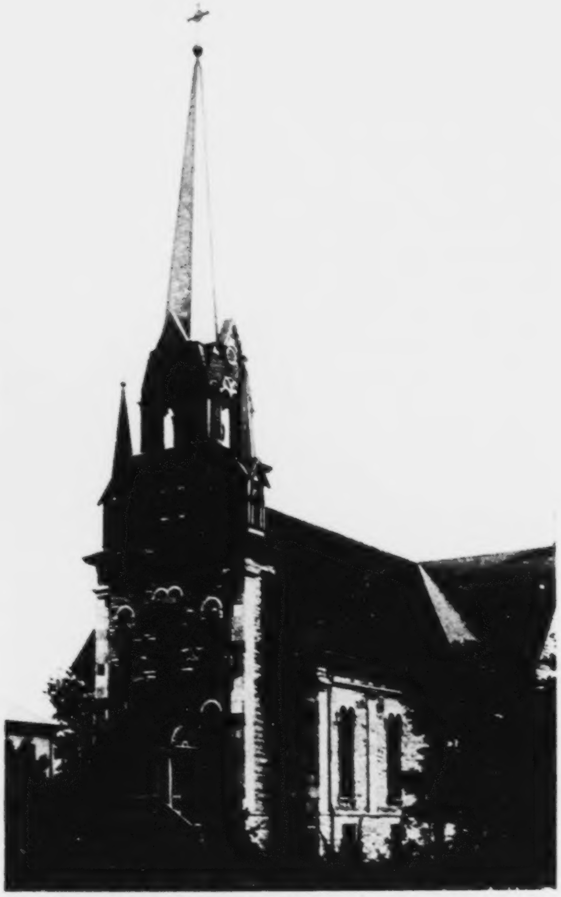
So he made a novena to our Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Lourdes: his promise was that if the Pope would appoint John Ireland as his successor, he would name a parish "Our Lady of Lourdes." Well, a letter arrived from Rome and he opened it up: John Ireland was made a bishop down in Nebraska. For some unexplained reason, the next week another letter arrived, and by gosh it was changed: John Ireland was named a co-adjutor bishop for the territory of St. Paul. And when this young French assistant waltzes into the chancellory, the bishop says, "Certainly I'll let you found a French parish, but I've got a name for it." And

*Father John Ireland, chaplain of the 5th Minnesota Regiment in 1862 (Minnesota Historical Society: copy of a St. Paul Seminary print).*

*Archbishop John Ireland (Minnesota Historical Society).*

this became, as far as I know, the first church in America named after the apparition; and, interestingly enough, this parish was dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes in July 1877, only seven years after the shrine church in France.

And so, you people who think there is no history in Minnesota should take note of little things like this: Junipero Serra had only built his mission in California seventy years before this became a Catholic church. The crucifix that you see on that wall – I found it up in the attic and restored to the church – was in a procession in 1877 into this building, which had been closed as a house of worship for quite a few years. The Universalists had closed their church: there is a photograph in the rectory showing how the weeds had grown up around it in the 1860s. The New England people moved across the river and built a limestone church, the Second Universalist Church, which today is St. Olaf's. Since we are on very good terms, the Universalist congregation and ours, I have always told the Reverend John Thomas: "Build your churches well because we may need to use them a long time!"



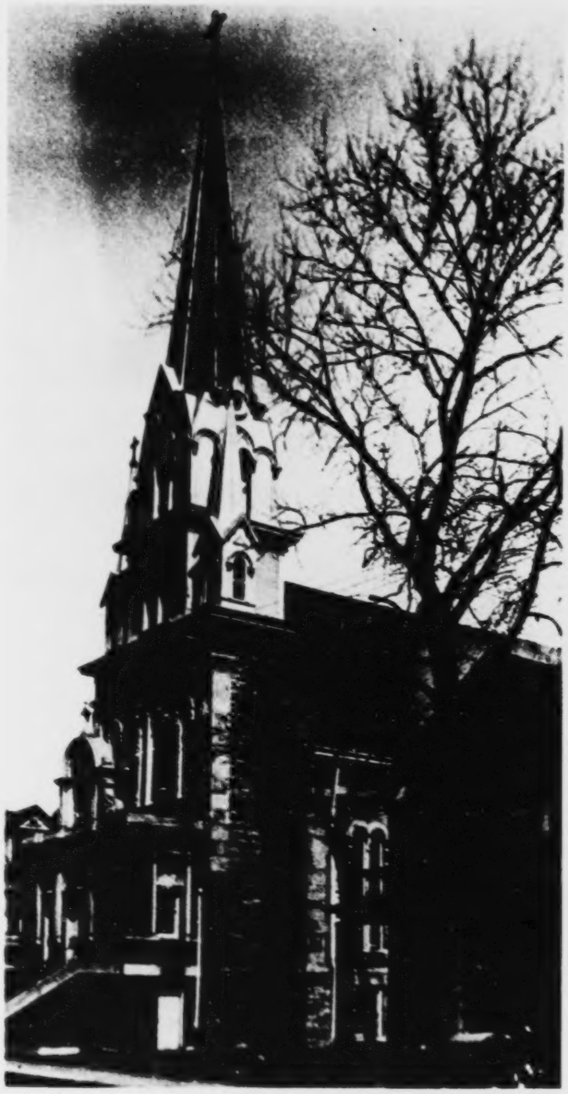
*The Church of Notre Dame de Lourdes as it appeared in 1900 (Minnesota Historical Society).*

That's how this parish got started. It was not a big enough building when about half of the members of St. Anthony Parish came down to this church: it was far too small, and so this part of the present design was added, the sacristy and the living quarters built, and the tower put up in 1881. There is a lovely one-ton bell which peals at noon for the Angelus; it is inscribed as a gift of the French people of Minneapolis to Our Lady of Lourdes. It was erected on Holy Saturday in 1881. The bell hadn't been rung for 28 years, but with the help of some of my Lutheran and Masonic friends, we had a big fund-raiser out in the suburbs in 1972. Now it is heard regularly again in the church steeple. It is pealed on religious holidays for Mass and also for civic events.

By the way, when the French ambassador came from Minneapolis and dedicated the monument outside the church to French-American relations in 1976, we pealed the bell for his arrival. As he walked into our church, just as you were playing the pipe organ when we came in, we had somebody playing the organ then. He looked up: away he went up the stairs and gave us the grandest concert of Bach music that one could have hoped for. He went on to become a politician in France, and I just found out today that he is well and still active.

Now, these are little asides, but the idea is to give you a feeling of a parish that was French. You must remember that until modern times Mass was always started in Latin; the French part was the homily, the sermon. When the pastor got up in the pulpit and spoke in French, we noticed the pews slowly started emptying, so we started preaching in English. They emptied more quickly in the 1930s because there was some fear that we double-sermoned, as we called it in this part of the country: almost every French parish had an English sermon and French sermon at all the Masses. It is very typical that eventually almost all of the parishes dropped their French sermons. So I see in the notes of Father Chouinard that the last French sermons in this church were preached in the 1940s.

I am going to stop this spiritual history and give you a little background of the building. The design, the basic design of this church is French, according to Dr. Murray McCance, who aided in the restoration of this building. He is from Toronto. It is one of the six basic designs; this particular church design is taken from a little country church about fifteen miles north of Chartres in France. It is also found, this design, in some of the parishes in Louisiana, and the lovely cathedral in New Orleans seems to have the same design. Notice, as in the design of many French churches, the triple steeple. The two little ones were just recently put back up; they had been gone for about fifty years. You have to see them from the outside, of course.


*The Church of Notre Dame de Lourdes as it appeared 50 years ago (Minnesota Historical Society – from the Library of Congress).*

In the restoration of this building, there was a feeling among the parishioners that the parish church had never been completed. It had the temporary altar made of plaster against the back wall. Those of you who are familiar with churches in the Twin Cities and have been in the St. Paul Cathedral will notice that where the altar should be under the great dome there are pews. This church was designed for a free-standing altar. It is a design of the late 1600s and early 1700s. So when the parishioners opened this church, they had a gas ring installed, an iron ring which probably was taken down when the church was electrified. The pews went right on up almost to the stairs.

To make this an authentic restoration, it was necessary to design the sanctuary around what was the original intent of the architect. This is the problem in restoring: you can't just copy something and say, "Well, we'll change it to suit our own pleasure." According to Dr. McCance, you either design the restoration to finish the building as it was intended to be; or if it was done well and you could still find all the parts, then you could restore it. Well, pews are not historic nor the plastered altar: in some notes that I have, it was mentioned by some of the people who were still living when I came here that they had always hoped to have a stone altar. And so, again in order to see the history of the liturgy properly, it's remarkable that this church is designed for all of the liturgical decrees of the second Vatican Council and yet the design goes back to the late 1600s. The Blessed Sacrament Table was designed to match this altar, which was taken from the plans of the permanent marble altars that were constructed during the time that this church was founded. It is a Parisian-French design which was very popular in some of the churches in French Canada. We took the tableau of the Last Supper and the two angels; it is made so that it is not an altar but a Communion table on which the Blessed Sacrament is placed.

What is original, and took a little while to locate, are the five sanctuary chairs. This was the original furniture of the sanctuary and dates from somewhere around 1878 or 1879. I sit in that chair and I can relate to some of the old French pastors who were here. A couple of them I feel I know well: Father J.A. Andre, who built the new rectory in 1903, probably enjoyed that chair because it was cold then, even as it is now. There was enough of a back to it to give protection from drafts.

Our relations with the Universalists are friendly enough to give us this lovely marble angel, which weighs a ton and a half. It is the only known copy of Thorwaldsen's "Kneeling Angel," and it was commissioned by the pastor of the Second Universalist Church. In their religion they stopped baptising infants fifteen years ago. Some of my classmates when we went to Southwest High School are on their board; they called and asked, "Can you find this angel a home?" And I said, "We have found the main beam under the church." So this has been the home of this beautiful gift from the Universalists.

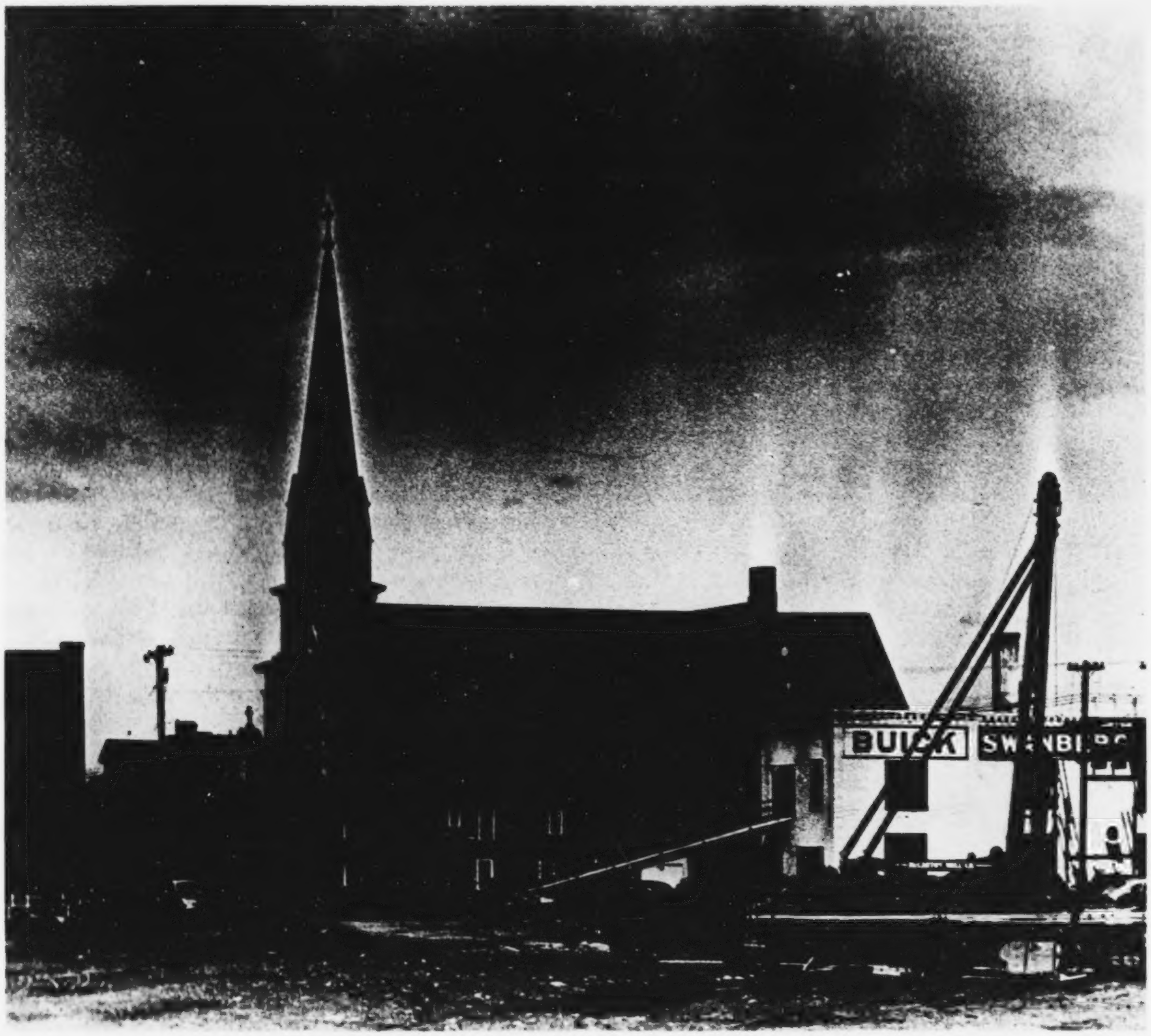
Mr. Cummins later called me and said he'd like to get together with me, and so we had lunch in 1976. He said, "We'd like to come to your church." I said, "Well, would you like to have a service here? We could schedule something around so you could come for a homecoming." He said, "No, we would like to come to Mass." And I said, "Those are stiff terms, but what I'll do is make you preach." So we had a very lovely time and, at every major dedication or event in this church, I always invite our friends from the Universalist congregation. We may be poles apart theologically, but the warmth and friendship perhaps reflects some of the early history of this city. These people understood what it meant to get along with each other and respect one another's beliefs and respect one another's needs.

The Sisters of St. Joseph, who built a convent on Pierre Bottineau's site, still have their own foundation there. Underneath the St. Anthony church someday will be a treasure trove for an archaeologist. It has never been excavated and stands on the site where they did much of their dealing with both the early French people in this area and the Indians.

You see, things don't just happen, do they? I know you could just say, "Well, this is a lovely little church." But it began with the people that started here: there are parishioners in this parish whose ancestors belonged to St. Anthony's Church in the late 1840s. And my first grade teacher at St. Stephen's School: her great-great aunt was the first vocation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. I had the pleasure of welcoming her back to her home parish and also celebrated a funeral mass. For me, when you ask about how these things link together, you must realize that there is more than a religious historic connection – a gratitude that I have in my mind toward the early settlers.

That's why I was sort of joking a little bit. If we were really and truly French Canadian, there would be very few men left in the city right now: they would be on their way to hunt deer. This parish went down 50 percent in number during the wintertime, for a great many went to the woods to cut what Franklin Steele first described as "an inexhaustable treasury of white pine." This is what made the area.

French Canadians understood this. They knew the area from its historic reputation, and so you find all along their footprints, so to speak. If any of you travel the Trans-Canada Highway, you'll find French settlements to Sault St. Marie. And then, if you come down the Michigan peninsula again to Escanaba, you will always find that the French were here early and moving this direction as they found this neck of the woods, which was so familiar in French Canada. They found a familiar environment, just as our Scandinavians found it



*Forty years ago, when this photograph was taken by Gordon Ray, the rehabilitation of the East Hennepin area had not yet begun (Minnesota Historical Society).*

around Center City – this likeness to the area they grew up in. They felt at home.

In the early days some of the French-Canadian parishioners of St. Anthony Parish took wealthy Southern summer visitors out to the gorgeous hunting area known today as Lake Calhoun, and all the way to Lake Minnetonka. The Winslow House that stood just past the riverbank street was their hotel: and when the Civil War came, the economic prosperity of this city was affected by the loss of first-rate tourist revenue. But that's what made the parish. People who came here were interested in the outdoors.

The second and third wave of French Canadian immigration that came to this city was not a happy immigration: any of you who know Canadian history realize there were several financial problems in eastern Canada in the 1880s and 1890s. Many of the second and third groups of immigrants opened stores along East Hennepin; there were small French shops that were so elegant and so nice.

As a young priest I met people – men and women – at that time in their late 90s, who would tell about the beautiful French pageants that were put on – not here in the church basement, mind you, but at the best theatres in the city of St. Anthony, later known as the East Hennepin shopping area. I have in the archives – I've been trying to put together a display eventually – programs of musical plays in French: the whole spirit of it was a continuation of the rich French culture. But like so many things in Canada, we had a French pastor in 1903 whose housekeeper was Nellie Shea; I found the oats bill for their horse (the horse's name was Laramie), and our little garage was the little horse barn. I had the privilege of knowing the last diocesan assistant in this parish in

*A close-up view of Our Lady of Lourdes as it appears today (Minnesota Historical Society).*

1916, Father Bierbroom, a great big man who came from Walloonia, the French-speaking area of Belgium. There was a group of fine French pastors here from Quebec, some of them are buried in the archdiocesan cemetery, some went home to retire and were buried in Quebec. You will find our list of the French pastors. I thought we should have a list of the pastors so you could find the names of the priests who volunteered to come out to the rough world of Minnesota; with their love and enjoyment of the outdoors, their love of people, it was a good relationship. I knew this kind of pastor when I was a youngster in Ottawa, where you see bilingual traditions, and I came out of one of those traditions.

In examining our archives here you begin to sense the relationships. The French, like all immigrant groups in a new country, first married within their own nationality. Later on the French were probably the most tolerant people that ever arrived on the Mississippi, who had no prejudice against Indians, who had no prejudice against blacks; as the lady pointed out in the lecture, you can read it in the baptismal records, in the marriage records. You can read a history of trying to keep alive something very beautiful in their lives and yet not bringing with it, as many immigrant groups did, a nationalism. It was a spirit. It was a culture.

In this parish, although there isn't the French population that there once was in the membership, there is a love and a respect that I notice by those who are not French for keeping the French tradition alive. There is a feeling of culture and understanding that does not necessarily describe persons of French nationality. I notice it works very well with people from Vietnam who feel French: there is a love of this parish. They come here where they feel the French environment, and yet they go on and develop their own Vietnamese culture.

Today Canada is bilingual legally, and in eastern Canada one does not sense the discrimination that I can remember many, many years ago. In this parish the pity of it is that the language has been almost lost. There is great difficulty in finding enough people for solemn religious holidays to have a reading in French. I remember the difficulty of trying to even find French lectionaries, and finally I wrote to a friend of mine in Ottawa who sent me the Canadian edition.

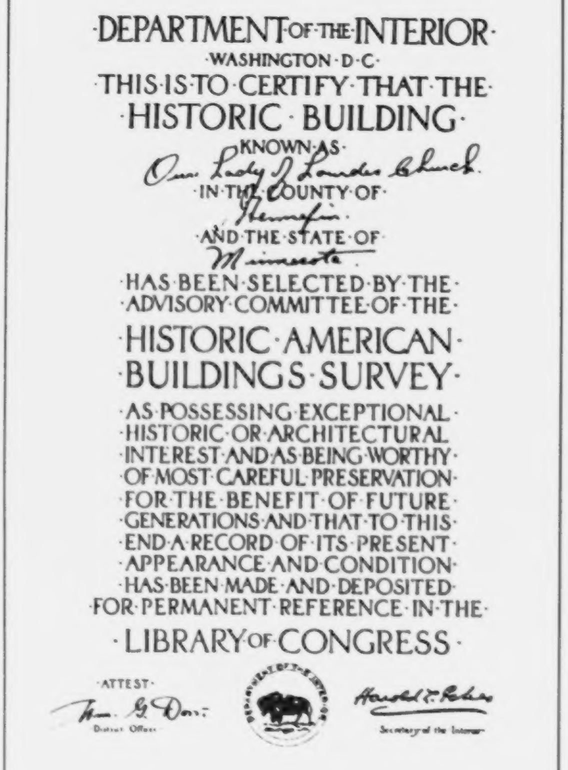
So when you talk about trying to keep the French language alive, you must understand that even in a place that prides itself on French culture there are not enough volunteers we can count on to have a French reading for all the great religious holidays. At Christmas, for instance, we make a great effort to have it. On all the days in the Holy Week, and some of the days of obligation and on any of the great festive days, we try to do a French reading if we can find someone to do it.

That might be a challenge to those of you who are of the Roman Catholic faith and who also love the culture and the traditions and beautiful sound of the French language. You might think about that at times: it is one thing to want these things and another thing to make them happen. At times it can mean a lot in a person's spiritual life, especially if you learned how to pray in French.

I remember one time when I was an assistant in a Slavic church, I made an effort to learn to say the prayers in Slavic. Why? Because to the old people that's the way to God. They talked to God in the only language God understands.

Well, if you've taken French culture seriously, it may not sound like a theological problem. I'm really not talking in a theological sense, but in a sense of transmitting certain phrases and sounds of devotion that I recognize amongst the French people. This parish continues on, and it will, probably, unless there is a shortage of priests. People keep asking if I am of French ancestry. If a shortage develops, you must pray that there will be some priest around to say Mass for you until the problem is resolved. I'm proud of my father's Canadian heritage, but my mother, who came from Europe, also had a love of French culture and spoke French. And so I respect those of you who are what Quebec calls "New England French" (or mainline French). I hope that what you heard today will give you a little idea of the situation as you begin to think out the future of French culture in Minnesota.

One of our parishioners who is Canadian speaks French like a trooper, I assure you. But what I am saying to you is that it's a fine thing to come up here and see the *fleur de lis* and smell the French meat pies being baked downstairs. I want to tell you that there are a lot of us making an effort to keep something alive until enough French people realize that the heritage stays – not just in the traditional families but within the community. It is not nationalism we talk about, because that's both the curse of the Catholic church and the curse of keeping culture alive. What we are talking about are some of the grand things that can be done when people know and appreciate their heritage, "The Quiet Heritage." Know that this old church will remain an island, attempting to keep its French heritage quietly but elegantly alive.



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·ATTEST·
District Officer

Harold L. Ickes
Secretary of the Interior

**Certification issued in 1934**

The Reverend Alan W. Moss was born on May 27, 1928, in Minneapolis. He was educated at the University of Minnesota and at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota. He was ordained at St. Paul Seminary on Pentecost, 1954.

He has served in various civic capacities for the city of Minneapolis and for the state of Minnesota and as chaplain for several professional groups.

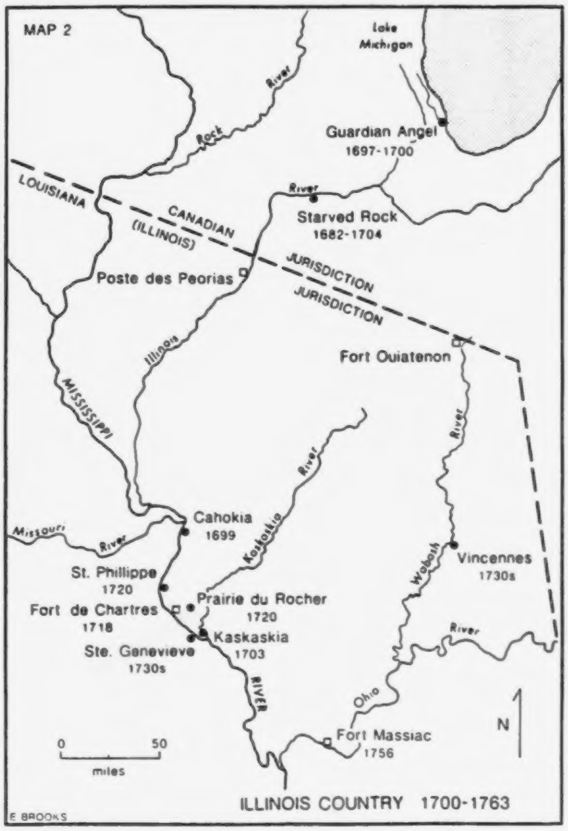
He has been the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church since July 1970. He has re-established the parish and worked on a major restoration of the church – the oldest standing church in the city of Minneapolis. One of three or four churches left in the state that were constructed before Minnesota became a state, this church was included on the National Historic Register in 1934.

# The Enhanced Economic Position of Women In French Colonial Illinois

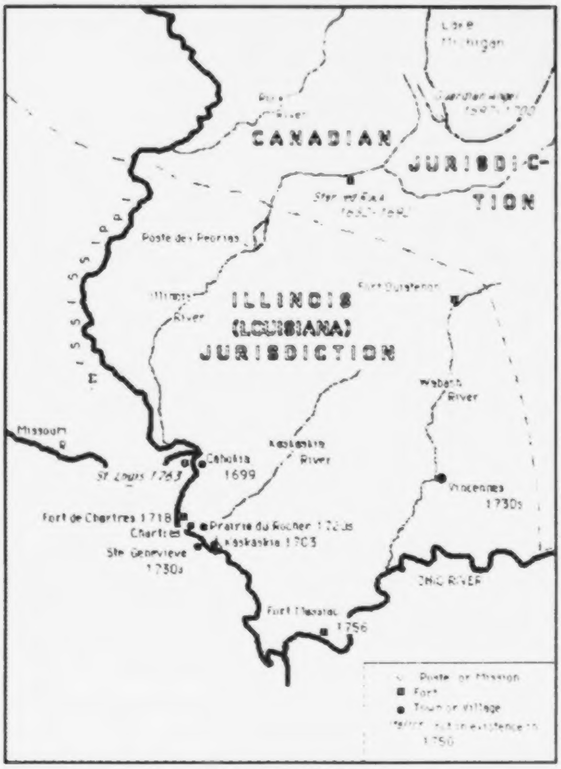
by Winstanley Briggs

The existence of such a society as French Illinois is itself a surprise to many people who often have, at most, vaguely heard of French settlements along the Mississippi. French interest in Illinois, however, stems from Joliet's and Marquette's famous trip in 1673. On their return north, when the Kaskaskia Indians guided them to Lake Michigan via the Chicago Portage, the French government immediately realized the importance of this discovery of an inland water route from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico, separated only by this roughly one mile stretch of dry ground. Paris then dispatched Robert de la Salle to find the mouth of the Mississippi and claim the area. This he succeeded in doing in 1682, having in the process established a *poste* at Starved Rock (Illinois), and from this dates permanent French presence in Illinois. When in 1700 the Kaskaskia tribe moved away from Starved Rock to the Illinois bottomlands below the present St. Louis, the French, missionaries and traders, followed. Here they were joined by numerous *coureurs de bois* who settled in as farmers – often with Christian Indian wives. This area, *le Pays des Illinois,* then prospered and grew via Canadian immigration of both sexes to the point that it was considered vital to incorporate it into the new Province of Louisiana in 1718.

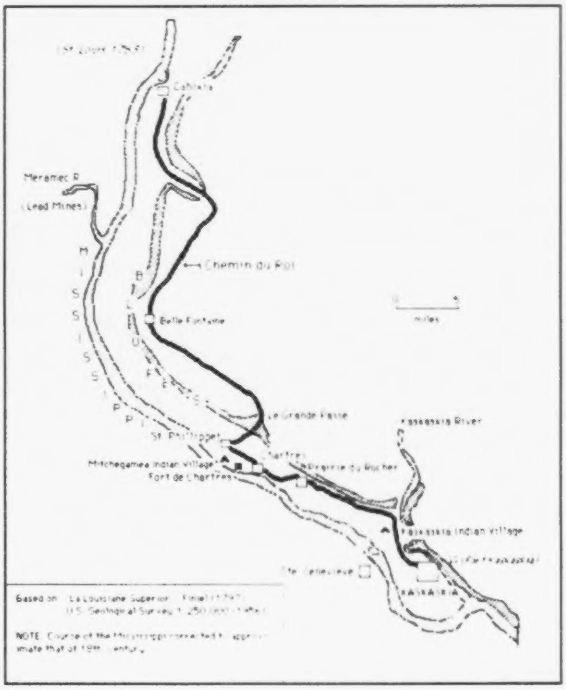
Living and prospering off the impressive export demand for food (principally for lower Louisiana) from the rich bottomlands, furs from the Upper Midwest, and lead from the local mines, *le Pays des Illinois* grew to approximately 3000 souls (including slaves) living in six separate towns. Not only prosperous, but largely independent due mainly to both the *habitants'* reputation for orneriness and their isolation from "higher authority," the Illinoisans effectively escaped the suffocating controls so dear to the French colonial Ancien Regime and evolved their own "Americanized" version of traditional, customary, early modern village life. Thus the *habitants* of Illinois were able to work out a life which coped in practical terms with their relatively small number, their isolation, and their perceived economic opportunities, all in a manner which did not do violence to their traditional values of consensual village life, based on the representation, safety, and preservation of every family/household.


MAP 2
Lake Michigan
Rock
River
Guardian Angel
1697-1700
River
Starved Rock
1682-1704
LOUISIANA
(ILLINOIS)
JURISDICTION
CANADIAN
JURISDICTION
Poste des Peorias
Illinois
Mississippi
Fort Ouiatenon
River
Kaskaskia
River
Missouri
River
Cahokia
1699
St. Phillippe
1720
Prairie du Rocher
1720
Fort de Chartres
1718
Kaskaskia
1703
Ste. Genevieve
1730s
Vincennes
1730s
Wabash
River
Ohio
RIVER
Fort Massiac
1756
0
50
miles
N
ILLINOIS COUNTRY 1700-1763
E BROOKS

Implicit in this Illinois version of traditional life were those circumstances in which society granted women an independence and a contol over their own lives rare, if not unique, in the eighteenth century. These circumstances were basically three in number. First of all was the shortage of women; in 1752 it appears that there were almost two men for every woman, thus making a wife a gift without price.[1] Obviously, women had considerable claim to respect under these conditions. Secondly, women were almost entirely removed from a centuries old, traditional restraint: that, in addition to their husbands, their other close male relatives should "look after" (*i.e.* supervise) them. In a


Lake Michigan
CANADIAN JURISDICTION
Poste des Peorias
ILLINOIS (LOUISIANA) JURISDICTION
Illinois River
Fort Ouiatenon
Wabash River
MISSISSIPPI
Missouri R.
Cahokia 1699
St. Louis 1763
Kaskaskia River
Vincennes 1730s
Fort de Chartres 1718
Chartres
Prairie du Rocher 1720s
Kaskaskia 1703
Ste Genevieve 1730s
OHIO RIVER
Fort Massiac 1756
Poste or Mission
Fort
Town or Village

Map 2. Illinois Country at the start of the Seven Years' War


St. Louis 1763
Cahokia
Meramec R.
(Lead Mines)
MISSISSIPPI
BLUFFS
Chemin du Roi
Belle Fontaine
miles
Le Grande Passe
Kaskaskia River
St. Philippe
Mitchegamea Indian Village
Fort de Chartres
Chartres
Prairie du Rocher
Kaskaskia Indian Village
Fort Kaskaskia
Ste. Genevieve
KASKASKIA

Based on: La Louisiane Superieur ... U.S. Geological Survey 1:250,000 ...

NOTE: Course of the Mississippi corrected to approximate that of 19th century.

Map [illegible]

first generation settlement area 1000 miles away from other French, there weren't any close male relatives – or at least they were very rare.

Having an inherent position of respect vis-a-vis husbands and being free of the influence of fathers and brothers, their relative independence was not generally impeded by old French customary law – and where it was, the situation was such that it could safely be ignored. The law concerned was the *Coutume de Paris*, the Custom of Paris, which Louis XIV had decreed to be the law of French America as well.

The old *Coutume de Paris*, while hardly a feminist tract, recognized women as "people" with important rights to a far greater degree than did eighteenth-century English law or that (subsequent) great Revolutionary "reform," the Napoleonic Code. The Custom of Paris was an odd, and often illogical, but very practical, blend of the two basic law systems of old France, the "Roman" written law of the south and the ancient customary law of the north and west. The southern written law, as far as the family was concerned, was based on the Roman principle of the *Pater Familias* who in ancient Roman origin was conceptually considered to "own" the family: he owned his field, he owned his oxen, he owned his wife, he owned his chickens, he owned his children . . . he owned everything. And, as owner, he could dispose of his property by testament as he wished when he died: primogeniture, favored child, equal shares . . . however he wished.

The customary law of northern and western France, originally including Paris, worked on the opposite principle, that of the lineage, and in some ways the individual was of no importance. Real estate, for instance, so essential to livelihood and status, really belonged to the lineage, and an individual was only a sort of trustee. Such property, called *propre*, was forbidden to pass out of the lineage (defined as the living descendants of some common ancestor) and was excluded from the marriage community; it had to be held individually, and it passed on in accordance with rigid, fixed rules. The community property of the marriage, the *communauté des biens*, could only contain movables except for that real estate actually bought during the marriage itself. Inheritance was strictly by lineage, and since all children share equally in their mother's and father's lineage, all children had to share equally – physically if possible – in the inheritance, there being no basis for any discrimination by age, sex or conduct.[2]

In the Paris area, under the needs of a vastly greater proportion of townsmen (How do you physically divide a wine shop?) and those of a relatively more powerful feudal nobility (who wished to avoid endless subdivision of their peasants' holdings), a technique was worked out to incorporate certain " Roman" features into the Custom to free it from its ironclad rigidity. The first of these was the concept of the donation (*préciput*) whereby one child alone could receive from his parents a specific, permanent gift, for instance, to give the daughter a sufficient dowry so that the son could inherit the whole wine shop or family landholding. Useful as this technique was, it was in fact in contradiction to the principles of the Custom because it allowed *inequality* of inheritance among children. To counterbalance this, a rule was invented to the effect that, at the parents' death, the favored child could keep his or her *préciput* by renouncing any right in the inheritance. Alternatively, the child could turn the *préciput* back into the family "pot" and share equally in the whole estate: a device, incidentally, which served admirably to ensure the daughter's not being "shortchanged" on her dowry-*préciput*.[3]

In order to make *préciput* work to prevent its subdivision, real property, *propre*, somehow had to be included in the marriage community, which was forbidden under the customary rules. Thus another illogical, but highly useful, device was invented: the *immeubles ammeublis*, the "mobilized immovables," by which each marriage partner could put some or all of his *propre* into the marriage community, by a specific clause in the marriage contract, thus freeing it from the ironclad rules of the Custom and making it disposable by the family.[4]

This increase in the property function of the family required streamlining the property management arrangements as well. This was achieved by importing the Roman *Pater Familias* with a vengeance. Whereas originally the husband could not touch his wife's contribution of *propre* without her specific consent, by 1770 François Bourjon, "Ancien Avocat de Parlement," in his immense *Droit Commun de la France et Le Coutume de Paris*, could state flatly that he can. The husband was "maître des biens," "chef," and "administrateur absolu" whose "every act" was valid without the wife being able to raise any obstacle. The wife's property, in fact, was "en la puissance de son mari," and, in legal theory at least, she was not even supposed to criticize him, being "incapable . . . même de critiquer son administration . . ."[5]

Naturally enough, she was forbidden to make any contract or engagement without her husband's specific permission, and if she should try, Bourjon defined her attempt as "d'un nullité absolu, radicale et sans réserve" because of "l'inespérience, . . . la légéreté, and (les) caprices de la femme." There was even a specific clause reiterating this principle in the matter of ordering dress material (*etoffes*) – obviously a dangerous loophole if not specifically blocked.[6].

This all-powerful husband, obviously, was in contradiction to the ancient customary, non-sex-differentiated concepts of equity and fairness. Since the wife had been reduced, in Bourjon's own words, to a mere "spectatrice," the traditional instinct for equality balanced these disadvantages by the most elaborate system of protections imaginable. First of all, it was declared that under these circumstances the community of property must bring the wife only gain and never loss. As this injunction was somewhat unrealistic, a series of highly concrete measures was immediately set forth. The first of these was the right of "renouncing the community," a right forbidden the husband. If she had no control over the community property, a wife could at least get out of the property arrangements at any time, including after the husband's death. She could not only get out, freeing herself from all debts (these being debts of the community of which she was no longer a part); she could take back (*reprendre*) everything she had contributed – provided she had included the specific *reprendre* clause in the marriage contract. After the husband's death the law required the production of a complete list of assets and liabilities and a statement of financial condition. If the new widow did not like the result, she could "renounce" and take back, to the last penny, everything she had ever contributed, leaving all the community's creditors with perhaps ten cents on the dollar.[7]

In addition, her liability for the community's debt was, in any event, drastically limited even when she was still a part of it,[8] and her rights to a profitable community were ferociously protected: she could really only lose them for proven adultery – and then only if her husband refused to take her back. She could not lose her fifty percent right to the community if her dowry remained unpaid; she could not lose her right if she abandoned the marital roof – a provision Bourjon justifies, in an insufferably superior tone, by references to a woman's "natural fickleness and lack of seriousness" and the need to grant "une juste indulgence . . . à sa foiblesse (weakness)."[9]

Even in this brief summary one can see that the family system of the *Coutume* was based on restricting the wife in favor of husbandly "authority" while granting her a large set of favored protections.[10] What happened in Illinois was very simple: the women kept the protections and disregarded the restrictions. While claiming absolute fidelity to the *Coutume de Paris*, the Illinois French, in fact, evolved a sort of consensual *"Coutume d'Illinois"* of considerable difference and which operated favorably for women (by the standards of the times). Consistently, throughout the surviving documentation, one finds clear evidence of "illegal" marriage and property arrangements both in the surviving marriage contracts and the recorded activities of husbands and wives, sharply contrasting with the provisions of the *Coutume* (which the literature shows to have been reasonably closely followed in France). The most startling difference, and the demonstration of the existence of a local "Custom," was the lack of marriage contracts among first-time brides and grooms in spite of their essentiality and universality in both France and Quebec.[11] Under the letter of the *Coutume*, the lack of a marriage contract was very disadvantageous – but not in Illinois, obviously, or the Illinoisans would have made them. Whatever the Illinois rules were, one did not need a marriage contract to follow them, except when there were considerable property or other complications involved. Widows, with their halves of their communities and their children, made them; the *jeunes filles habitantes* did not. Not only that, but a close examination of those contracts that still exist reveals in them a considerably different outlook from that expressed by Bourjon.[12]

*Interior of restored French house, Ste. Genevieve, Missouri. This is the nearest remaining example of what the inside of Illinois houses looked like in the period under review.*

Upright log construction with masonry or "wattling" between logs, "Poteaux en Terre." *Standard building method in eighteenth-century Illinois (Ste. Genevieve, Missouri).*

Between the surviving marriage contracts and the mass of other surviving documentation we can get a fair – if not exactly proportional – representative sampling of Illinois French society. Society in the Illinois parish which is the subject of my analysis was organized as follows:

Official/Military "elite": 11% of the population.
Settler "elite": 12% of the population.
Ordinary *habitants*: 77% of the population.

While the following examples and anecdotes do not pretend to conform to these exact percentages, they do flow across the entire social spectrum and thus represent Illinoisan *mentalité*. Of the eight women specifically mentioned, one is of the official/military elite, three are local *habitant* elite, and four are ordinary settlers, just *habitantes* with no claim to any "better" status. And in the particular case of real estate transactions, one hundred percent of all surviving cases in all social strata follow the Illinois practices mentioned. Thus these examples all represent the normal course of events in *le Pays des Illinois*.

One of the most noticeable Illinois differences concerns the donation called *préciput*, whose original purpose was to endow a child so as to avoid splitting real property. In Illinois, real property not being quite such an obsession as it was in France, *préciput* was used for an entirely different purpose than in France. It became a sort of longevity prize awarded to the surviving spouse – almost always the wife given the considerable age differences.[13] Sometimes very large, up to 5000 *livres* – roughly the cost of five houses – the marriage contracts regularly held that this death *préciput* was to be considered part of the wife's "contribution" to be "taken back" should she renounce the community. According to the *Coutume de Paris*, of course, this was legal nonsense; the *préciput* was to be given after the husband's death from the assets of the community, any interest in which the wife had just renounced. Despite this being flatly illegal,[14] Illinois wives were regularly able to obtain this concession with – given its frequency – the acceptance of society.

They were able to obtain a lot when renouncing: not only their *préciput*, but also their *douaire*, a marriage gift by the husband used to roughly double the wife's contribution to the community, and naturally, their *dot* (dowry) their own original contribution. Occasionally they insisted on what amounted to alimony and child support. While all this may have been "fair" it is not exactly what the Custom meant by "renouncing."[15] That the wives, with the concurrence of society, could successfully insist on thus modifying the law to their own considerable advantage is a measure of their position.

Another interesting difference is the effective vanishing of real property as *propre*, lineage property which must be passed on by a set of rigid ironclad rules. Without the French obsession over holding a piece of land and a house (in Illinois one could be granted roughly one hundred acres, free, just by asking) and with the nearest lineage members probably 1000 miles away in Quebec, if not 6000 miles away in France, the notion of *propre* simply disappeared – at least for real property. The wives of French Illinois, however, successfully applied the concept to what was *really* important on the banks of the Mississippi in the first half of the eighteenth century: those accoutrements of living which give a certain comfort and refinement. Thus, Mme. de St. Ange, future Grande Dame of Illinois, insisted in 1724 that her contribution of a bed and linen must return to her family if there were no children, just as, for instance, did Marie Louise Langlois in 1740.[16] Useless to comment, this was completely illegal – *propre* real estate, according to the *Coutume*, being one thing and rigidly defined, and movable objects something entirely different. There was no legal way one could turn freely disposable movable objects into rigidly "entailed" *propre* – except, of course, in Illinois, where wives could insist on it.

It is also quite obvious that in Illinois wives were not, *pace* Bourjon, mere "spectatrices" but active participants in their marriage community. While in France the wife was "en la puissance de son mari" who as "administrateur absolu" could, by himself, dispose of everything while she needed his consent for anything,[17] in Illinois the reverse seems to have been true. The notary documents are filled with scrawled signatures and "X's," formally attested to by the notary, as the wife's *required* mark of agreement to any land or housesale; they were, in fact, co-participants. Thus, when Marie Fafar got hauled into court in 1741 in her husband's absence over an unfulfilled house repair contract made by her husband, the court had no problem in socking her with a 182 *livres* fine. Although her husband made the contract, in his absence *she* got the fine; it never crossed anybody's mind that Marie Fafar was a mere *spectatrice*, – she was obviously a participant.[18] As was Lalande's wife to whom he gave a full power-of-attorney to settle a lifetime's affairs in Illinois while he went ahead to New Orleans. This practice of and ability to participate in the handling of their marriage community's affairs explains the many managing, competent and even aggressive widows constantly met with in the documents – they had had the requisite experience as participating wives, regardless of what rules the *Coutume de Paris* set forth. They were no more "spectatrices" than they would have been "incapable . . . même de critiquer." (Even in France, this prohibition of wifely criticism undoubtedly fell into the category of "nice try"; in Illinois, with wives active participants with or without their husbands, it was obviously not even to be thought of.)

With this kind of independent activity and the frequency of wives controlling their own capital resources, one would expect that the women of Illinois might often appear on their own in economic matters. Oddly enough, the records do not bear this out, at least with women as principals. One can always sense the wife as an important element in economic decisions, but always formally in the background. At the level of legal documents the traditional eighteenth-century ground rules held pretty fast, except in some exceptional circumstances such as Lalande's full power-of-attorney to his wife to settle a complete lifetime's affairs by herself. In fact, only one wife appears purely on her own in economic dealings, Rene[e] Drouin, wife of "La Forme," whose activities corresponded exactly with the *Coutume's* traditional description of the *femme marchande publique*.[19] In addition to the activities involved in her running an inn, Rene(e) Drouin signed a government contract (with the Commandant Alphonse de la Buissonière personally) in 1740 to do the hospital laundry for one year. It was a pretty good contract, too; she was to be paid 140 *livres* in merchandise at *New Orleans* prices, that is, minus the heavy convoy freight charges to Illinois.[20] Rene(e) Drouin is perhaps unique in

*Old French Church in Cahokia, Illinois, ca. 1790. Typical construction.*

another way; she seems the only woman whose activities actually conform to the *Coutume de Paris*.

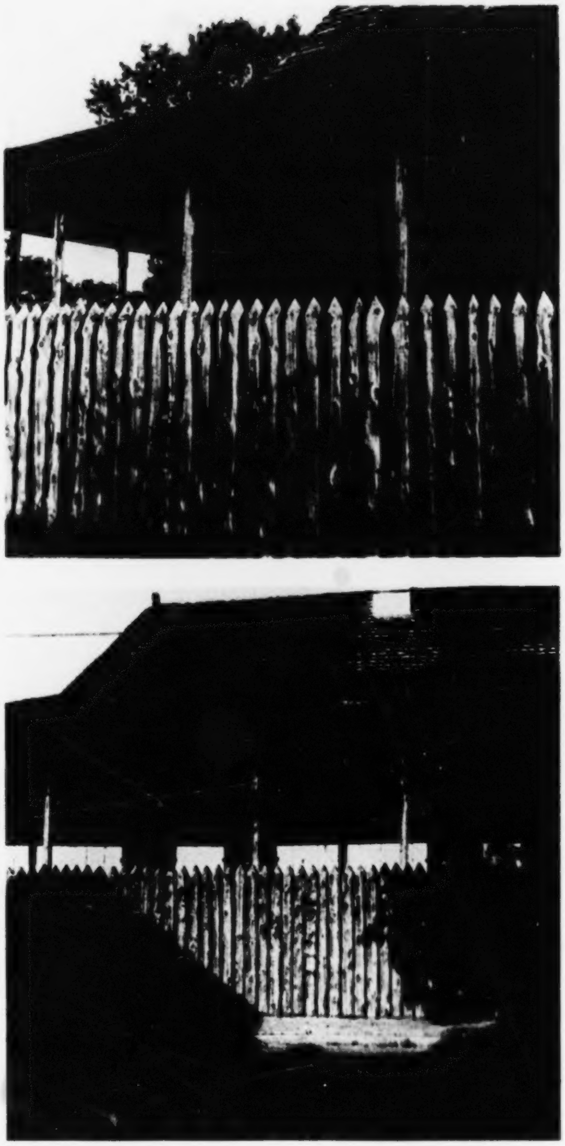
Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of the ladies' determination to handle their own affairs, *Coutume* or no, are the complications caused by Marie Rouensa and Barbe Colin, who, in the end, essentially got their own way despite the legal distress they caused the authorities in their insistence on knowingly setting aside even the most fundamental rules of the *Coutume*. In 1725 Marie Rouensa, the extremely wealthy and "sainted" Kaskaskia Indian "princess,"[21] and by now the widow of the Frenchman Michel Philippe, determined to exclude her son, Michel, from her succession. Young Michel's crime was that he had gone back to the Indians and was living among them, much to the Indian Marie Rouensa's horror. Since there was no way one could exclude one's children under the lineage-oriented *Coutume*, her petition went up to the *Conseil d'Illinois*. Despite Marie Rouensa's status, her "clout," and her wealth, the council, made up of metropolitan officials sent to Illinois, was not prepared simply to accept such blatant violation of the fundamental tenet of customary inheritance. Thus, after a week of consideration, the Council gave the Solomon-like ruling that, yes, she had a point, but Michel still couldn't be disinherited. Instead, his equal share of her very impressive assets would be sequestered until such time as he thought fit to return among the French. (He returned.) With the cooperation of a week's worth of effort by the entire Illinois Council in juggling the *Coutume* to avoid its blatant violation while following the mentality of the Illinoisans, Marie Rouensa got essentially what she wanted.

Barbe Colin wanted an even more drastic wrench given to the *Coutume*. First married to the solid *habitant* François Eloy "St. François," when he died, Barbe, with half of "St. François' " *communauté*, married the equally respectable François Paboeuf "St. Laurent." When "St. Laurent" died, Barbe, now the possessor of half of two communities, well set up indeed and evidently bored with "saints," chose in 1755 as husband number three Giovanni Battista Giacomini, almost certainly a garrison soldier, asset accumulation obviously no longer being what was on her mind. Not surprisingly, this prospective liaison apparently infuriated her children who raised as much hell as they could. Enraged in her turn, Barbe tried to cut them *all* out of any inheritance, to the visible distress of the notary, an imported elite French official who took the letter of the *Coutume* quite seriously. With what was obviously extreme reluctance, given the clear and unequivocal language of the *Coutume*, the notary finally accepted the provision, but made the couple, and particularly

Giacomini, specifically acknowledge the risk of a lawsuit by the children at Barbe's death since the arrangement was diametrically opposed to the customs. But Barbe, nevertheless, got what she wanted, too.[22]

Perhaps the most independent of all was the Widow Lefevre who, at least once, went off on her own fur trading expedition among the Indians, a female *voyageur ("voyageuse"?)*. In the fall of 1737, for the sum of 1500 pounds of flour, she leased out the family slave for one year, carefully requiring the leasee to provide him with shoes, hired Jean Chapron, *voyageur*, as the other half of her crew and set off up the Mississippi in a canoe piled with trade goods for the Iowa River – Marie Genevieve paddling one end of the canoe and Chapron handling the other.[23] That she was allowed to do this by the authorities and apparently without scandal speaks volumes for the status of women in French Illinois. There was probably no other eighteenth-century society in which such an adventure would have been conceivable. It boggles the mind, for instance, to even imagine some Puritan "goodwife" of Massachusetts climbing into a canoe with a hired hand to go fur trading.

Whatever the true condition of women in France, in Illinois the scarcity value of women, the lack of close male relatives combined with the frontier conditions, produced a society in which women lived under the least social constraints of all European societies of the eighteenth century. Through women's early marriages (often at 15), their longevity, their remarriages, and their property accumulation, status in Illinois was possibly more matrilineal than patrilineal. The Philippe family's claim to deference stemmed strictly from descent from Marie Rouensa. The de St. Ange's highly superior status was based on the fact that Mme. de St. Ange arrived early and lived approximately forever. The affirmation of women is also a good indication of the sense of safety and security of life in *le Pays des Illinois*. Had there been, on the part of community, perceived threats of Indian attacks, poverty, land shortage, insecurity of tenure or other common terrors of the eighteenth century, it seems doubtful that women would have achieved as much; the more "protection" society feels is necessary, the more "control" is obviously required. In short, French Illinois was a society which, under the needs and conditions of frontier life, was able to evolve a new, more "equal" condition for women without any apparent conflict with its traditional values of family-based, consensual, customary village society.



*These are two exterior shots of a typical French Illinois house in Ste. Genevieve. It is, however, of later date (ca. 1780) and, therefore, much larger than that of the Widow Lefebre or Barbe Colin.*

Dr. Winstanley Briggs earned his doctorate at the University of Chicago after a long career as a business-professional representative in several Asian countries. At present he is vice president of the Center for French Colonial Studies at Prairie du Rocher, Illinois. He is researching the roles played by French-American women and writing on this subject.

## Notes

[1]The reconstructed male-female ratio comes to 1.8 to 1. See Winstanley Briggs, "The Forgotten Colony: *Le Pays des Illinois,*" Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1985, Chapter 4, for the demography of the Parish of Ste. Anne (Fort de Chartres).

[2]See Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, "Family and Inheritance in Sixteenth Century France," in *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200-1800,* eds. Jack Goody, Joan Thirst, and E.P. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) as well as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, "Systeme de la Coutume," *Annales E.S.C.* 27 (1972) for fuller explanations of these systems.

[3]François Bourjon, *Le Droit Commun de la France et Le Coutume de Paris,* 2 vols. (Paris, 1770), II *Partie, Titre* XII, Chapters 4 and 5, pp. 841 et seq.

[4]Bourjon, *Droit,* II, *Partie, 22nd. Clause,* Chap. 7, p. 523.

[5]Bourjon, *Droit,* III, Chap. 8, Clause 3 and 4, p. 564 and IV, Chap. 6, Clause 2, p. 566.

[6]Bourjon, *Droit,* IV, Chap. 3, Clause 1 and 6, p. 578.

[7]Bourjon, *Droit,* IV, Chap. 5, Clause 2, p. 591 and Chap. 8, p. 600.

[8]Bourjon, *Droit,* IV, Chap. 5, Clause 23, p. 544.

[9]Bourjon, *Droit,* IV, Chap. 5, Clause 23, p. 554.

[10]See Winstanley Briggs, "The Forgotten Colony: *Le Pays des Illinois,*" University of Chicago Ph.D. dissertation, Chap. 4, for a more complete and detailed discussion.

[11]See Louise Dechêne, *Habitants et Marchands de Montréal au XVII Siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1974), p. 419 and Bourjon, Droit, I, Chap. 2, Clause 1 and 9, p. 510.

[12]See Briggs, "Illinois," Chap. 5.

[13]Examples: Items 40/4/21/1, 45/8/14/1 in "The Kaskaskia Manuscripts," microfilm, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois. These manuscript documents are hereinafter referred to as "M-Doc. (number)."

[14]Bourjon, *Droit,* VI, Chap. 5, Clause 4, p. 631 and VII, Chap. 2, Clause 75, p. 662.

[15]M-Doc. 40/4/21/1, 46/9/10/1, and 47/9/5/1.

[16]M-Doc. 24/3/18/1 and 40/4/21/1.

[17]Bourjon, *Droit,* III, Chap. 8, 4, 6, and others.

[18]M-Doc. 41/10/10/1.

[19]Bourjon, *Droit,* II, 4eme, Chap. 9, Clause 31, p. 538.

[20]M-Doc. 40/11/27/1.

[21]Marie Rouensa had been the Jesuits' first convert, and through her, first her father, the chief, and then the whole Kaskaskia tribe became Christians.

[22]M-Doc. 25/6/13/1, 25/6/14/1, 25/6/20/1, 55/7/15/1. Barbe Colin may be a good example of who made marriage contracts in Illinois. We have her contract for this third marriage; we have a record of a contract (but no document) for her second marriage; but for the first, uncomplicated marriage there is no trace whatsoever of any marriage contract.

[23]M-Doc. 37/10/9/1.

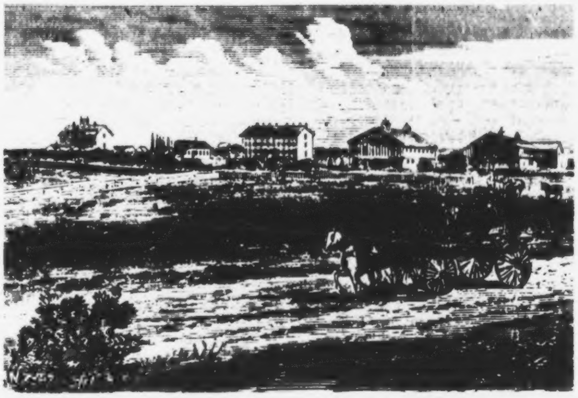
# Silkville: Fourierism on the Kansas Prairies

by L. David Harris

"Silkville" – the sign stood along Highway 50, 20 miles southwest of Ottawa, Kansas, until 1981. Battered and pummeled, it finally fell down and was hauled away. Yet within a mile of the sign are some of Silkville's original buildings and its mulberry trees.[1]

The community was founded by Ernest de Boissiere in 1869. De Boissiere, a French nobleman, aristocrat and millionaire, came to the United States after Napoleon conquered France. Despite his wealth and land holdings, de Boissiere had been on the side of the people, enamored with the "Rights of Man" – too enamored for the tastes of Napoleon, and he had fled for his life.[2]

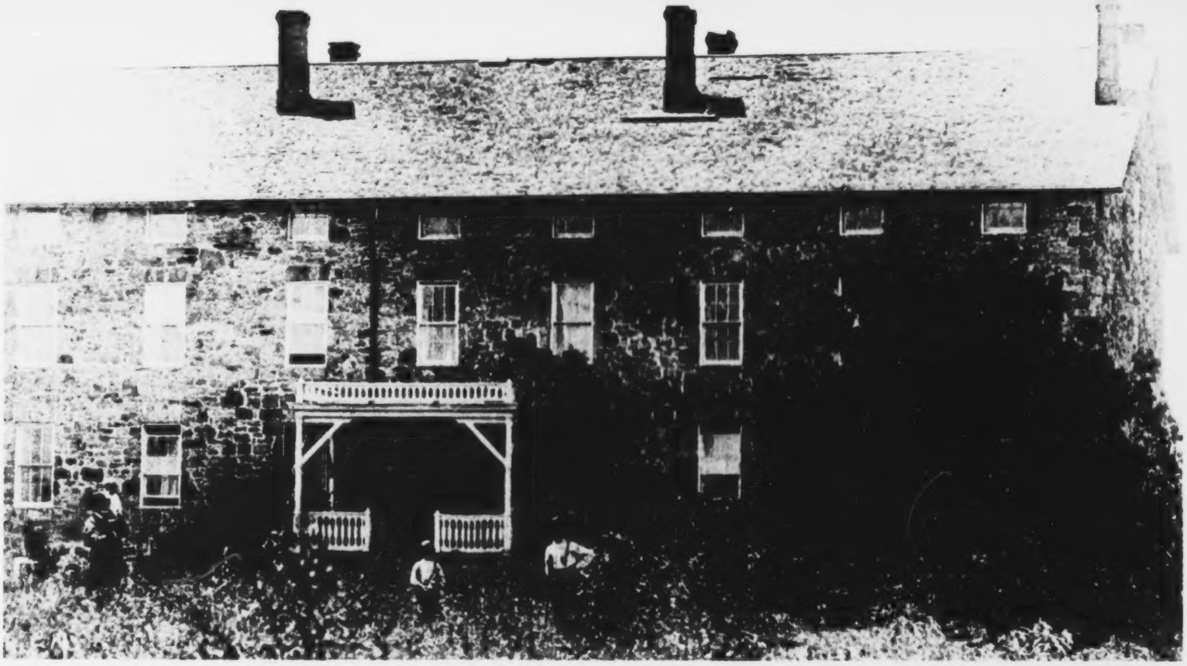
In America, de Boissiere entered the shipping business in New Orleans and soon was wealthy again. However, a charitable gift to a Methodist relief project for black (former slave) children earned him the hatred of his white New Orleans neighbors and customers.[3]


*Silkville, Kansas (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*

In 1869, discouraged and disillusioned, he arrived in Kansas. He was 59 years old, wealthy, but uncomfortable in spirit, still stung by the bigotry of the people in New Orleans. He had heard that in Kansas, still in the throes of settlement, there was room for everyone, for all views; people were tolerant, even tolerant of rich men with communal dreams.

In early 1869 he purchased 3,600 acres in Franklin County from the Kansas Educational Association of the Methodist Church. He en-

*Silkville – Flagging a train 1900-1903 (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*



*Silkville – Original main building (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*

*Silkville building (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*

*Silkville building (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*

visioned a self-sufficient community, a cooperative venture, and he organized the Prairie Home Association to get it going. The company was to be, in short, "a capitalistic holding company for a communal enterprise."[4]

All the members of the community would live in one large building in a "combined household." Work would be cooperative, communal, and all pay would be in proportion to production. Memberships in the Home Association were sold at $200 each, and with each membership went de Boissiere's personal guarantee of "education and sustenance indulged with largest liberty."[5]

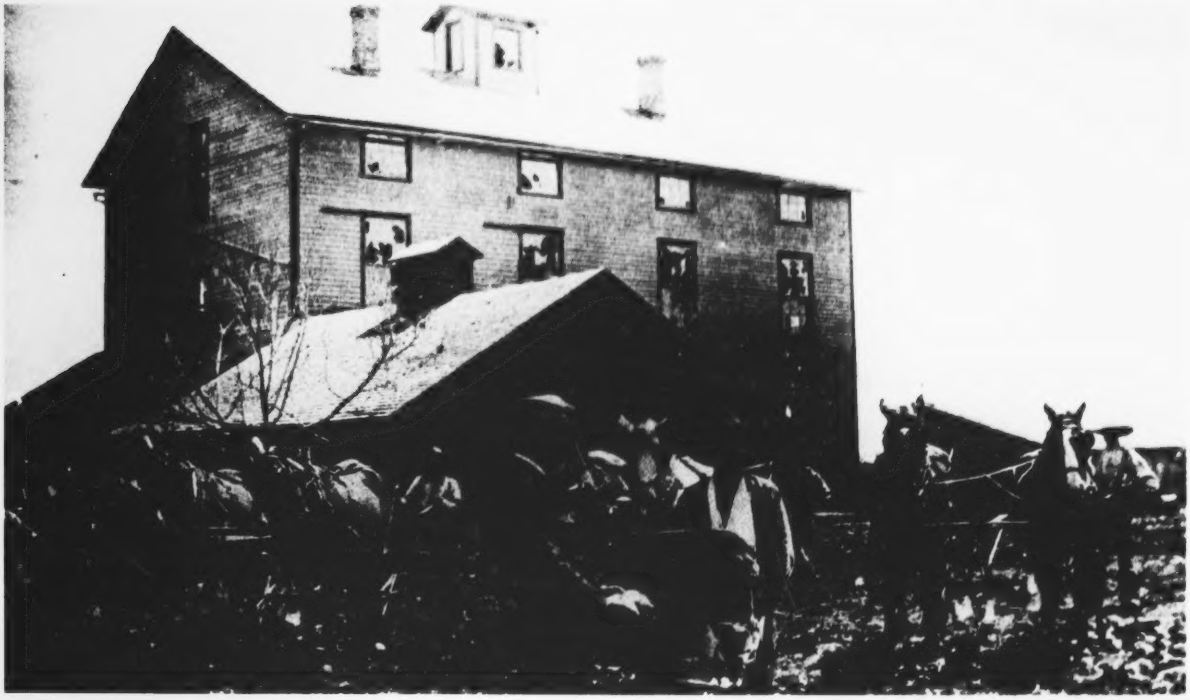
The community's primary business would be silk. De Boissiere started with 40 workers; at some points there may have been as many as 100. Nearly all were from France and included silk dyers and weavers, along with a number of adventurers who wanted to see the United States, as well as a motley assortment of believers who shared his communal ideas.[6]

Progress was swift and sure. They planted wheat and corn, walnut trees, arbors of grapes and a 70-acre mulberry forest from seeds that de Boissiere had imported from his estate in France. Within two years there were at least 1,000 grape vines, 10,500 mulberry trees, 2,000 peach trees and 900 other trees sprouting throughout Silkville's fields and pastures. At least a dozen farm ponds provided water for livestock as well as ice (in the winter) which could be stored for summer.[7]

Silkville's structures were built with quarried native stone. There were barns and stables for livestock, granaries for food and storage, a three-story cheese factory, an ice house, a "silk house," one or two churches, a schoolhouse and a lodge hall. The area was surrounded by 15 miles of stone fence and 10 miles of wire fence.[8]

But its central building, a veritable mansion, dominated the scene. It was 73′ by 300′ with a central covered court, and its 60 rooms accommodated from 80 to 100 residents. There were spacious parlors for entertaining, community dining rooms, family apartments, a study, a library of at least 2,500 volumes, and an elevator, perhaps the first of its kind in Kansas.[9]

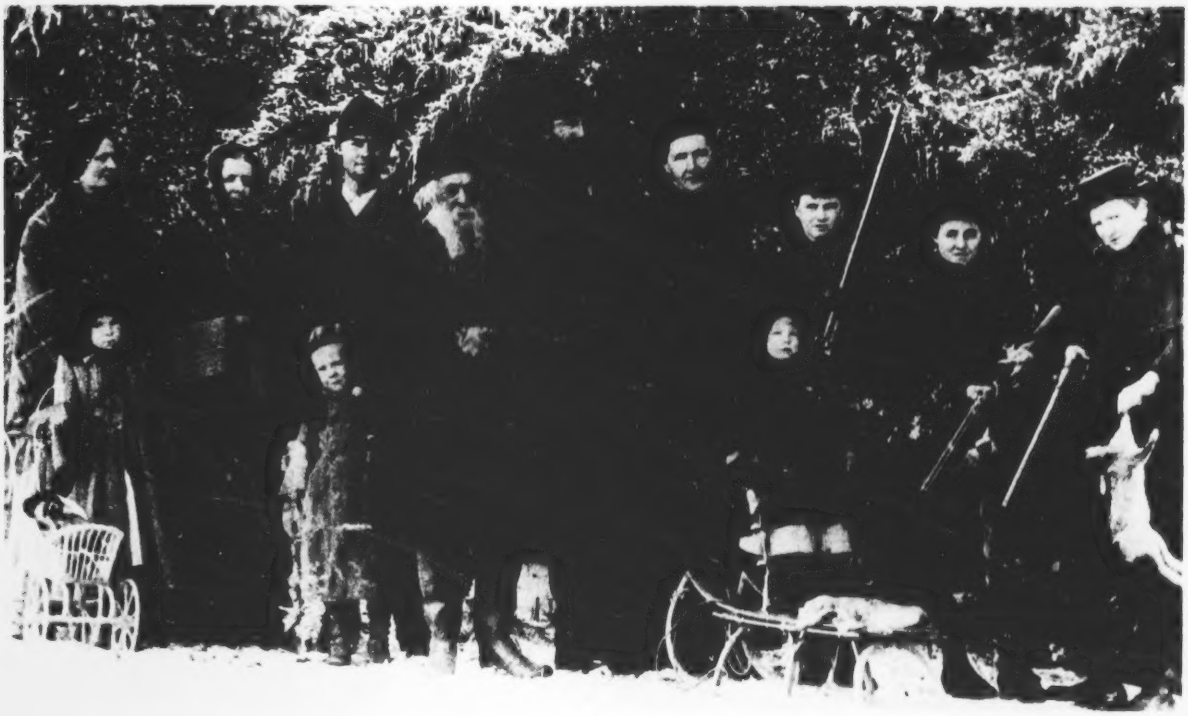
At first, the silk business flourished, and de

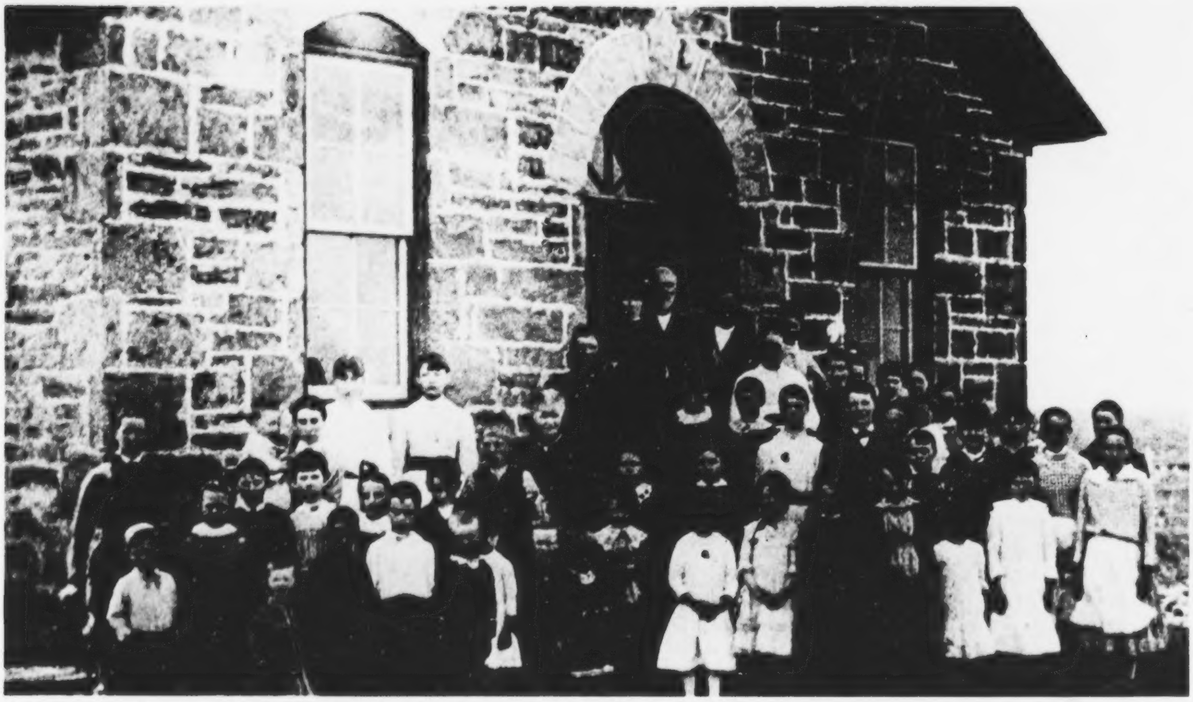


*Above: Silkville – 1885 cheese house (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*

*Right: Silkville – horse hauling milk (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*

*Below: Silkville – Christmas 1880s. De Boissiere is sixth from left (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*





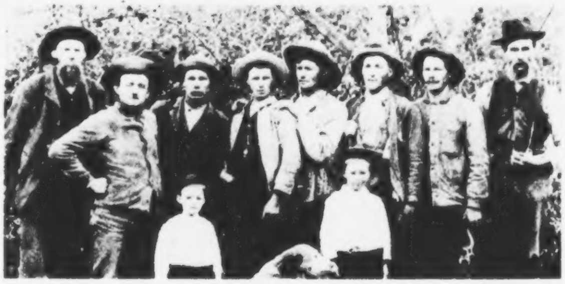
*Silkville – schools – 1884 (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*

Boissiere busied himself with silkworm research. The first worms were brought from New Orleans and de Boissiere was dissatisfied with them. Silkworm eggs were then brought in from California, then from France, but still the worms failed to meet de Boissiere's standards. Finally, in 1873, de Boissiere imported worms from Japan – a select, expensive strain – and by 1875 the Silkville worms were of a quality that was better than those of the Japanese.[10]

By 1876, Silkville's looms had a capacity of 224 yards a day. Production had gone from silk ribbons to large, majestic bolts of silk. In 1876 the community's silk won a blue ribbon at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, and Japanese silk experts had pronounced Silkville's worms and cocoons better than the finest of France and Japan.[11]

Numerous writers have reported that Silkville irritated its neighbors and was the source of division, bitterness, and ridicule within the larger community. They have written that throughout predominantly Methodist and Baptist Franklin County de Boissiere was distrusted as an atheist who was anti-religion, believed in "free love," and sponsored sex orgies at Silkville.[12]

However, no articles in nearby newspapers of that time contain any of these charges, and there is every reason to believe they were never made. On the contrary, people who lived at Silkville always maintained it was a very moral



*Above: Silkville farmers, loading cattle 1903-11, coyote hunt "wolfhunt" 1916 (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*

place. While de Boissiere was not known to attend church, he had donated liberally to Methodist causes, purchased Silkville's site from the Methodists, and there was at least one church, perhaps two, on Silkville's grounds. On many occasions, religious services were held at Silkville's mansion.[13] As for "free love," there is no evidence that the role of family was anything other than orthodox. Certainly marriage was not abolished; two of Silkville's residents, Charles T. Sears and Miss M.L. Lockhart, were married while they lived there.[14]

De Boissiere sponsored ice cream socials, literary and religious programs, and other events for Silkville residents, but they were attended by neighbors as well; Silkville was known as an open, friendly place. De Boissiere held county political offices, served as the vice president of the First National Bank of Ottawa (the county seat), and was praised a number of times in the newspaper of the neighboring community of Williamsburg for his ideals and "the work he (was) doing in Kansas."[15]

The community's silk business was at its zenith in 1880. By 1882 business had declined, and by 1886 Silkville was abandoned.[16] The main reason was dropouts. Once the Frenchmen who had been imported to the colony learned English, they became poor communists. They discovered that the price they paid to become members of the colony, could, instead, easily finance a quarter section of Kansas land for homesteading. Many of Silkville's single women married area farmers.[17]

Forced to hire workers, de Boissiere could not sell the community's silk in competition with silk that had been produced in France and Japan by cheaper labor.[18]

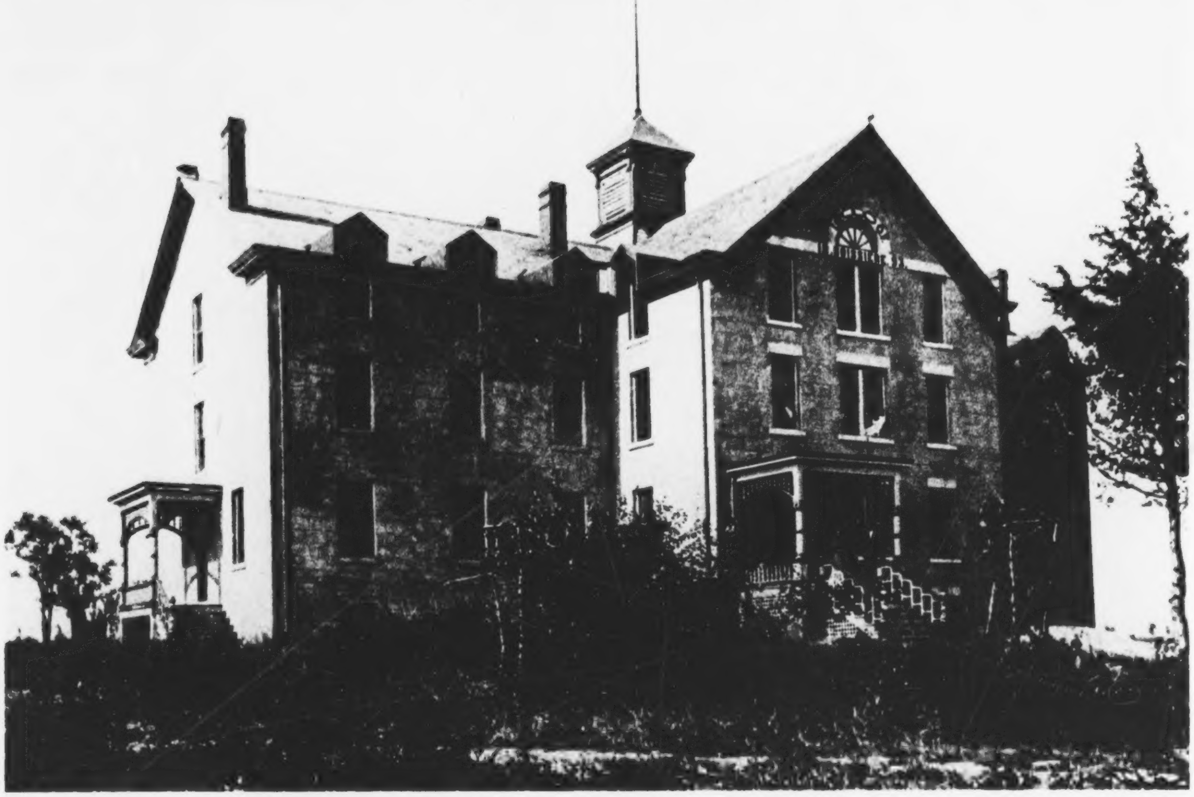
Exhausted and discouraged, de Boissiere returned to France in 1884. His property in France, which had earlier been confiscated had been returned to him; once back in France, he built an industrial school on the land; within a short time the school was prospering.[19]

De Boissiere returned to the United States, briefly, in 1892 to take care of his American business interests. He donated the Silkville property, valued at $125,000, to the Kansas Odd Fellows Lodge for an orphans home. Its main building eventually accommodated 30 to 40 children, but the disposition of the property was argued in court for several years. By 1900 the Odd Fellows had sold the property and it had become a private farm. In 1916, the main building, the grand mansion that epitomized Silkville's communal aspects, was ravaged by a fire[20]

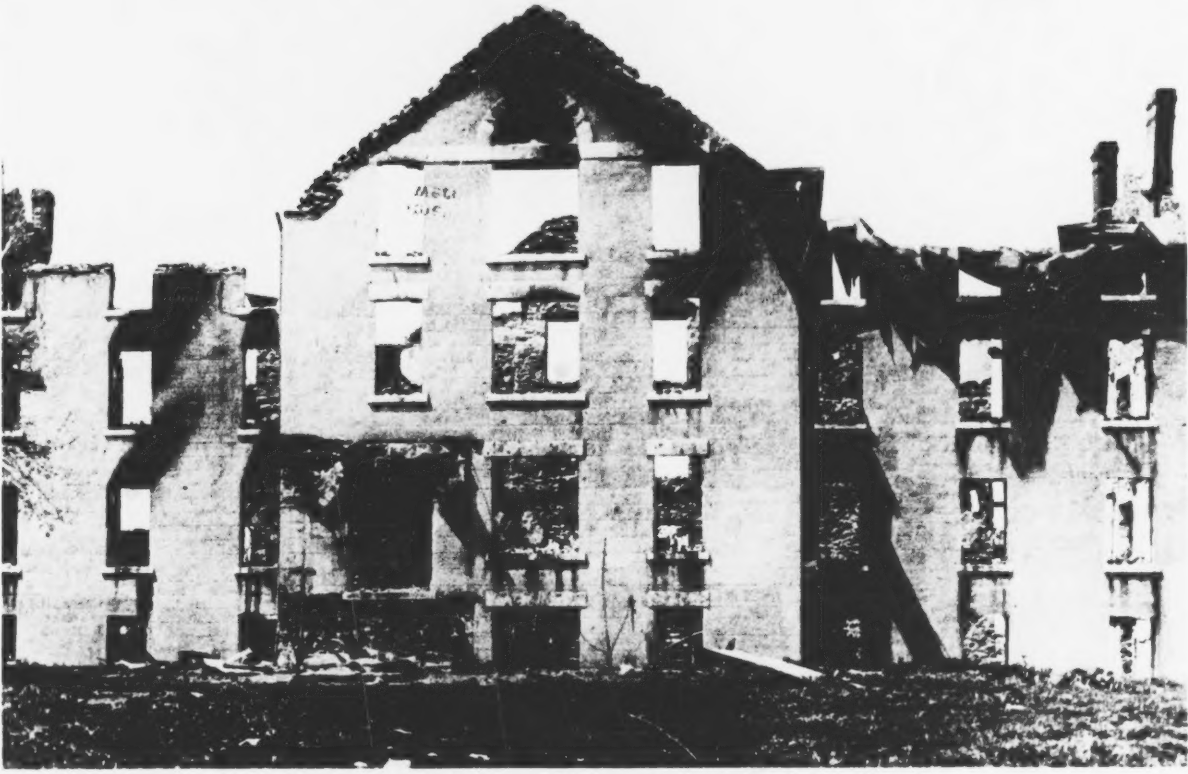
De Boissiere died in France in 1894. He left a number of gifts to family and friends, but the majority of his estate, which was valued at millions of dollars, he left to educational and charitable causes.[21]

Dr. L. David Harris was an instructor in the Center for Media and Communication Studies at Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, at the time of the conference. Since that time he has joined the faculty of Pennsylvania State University.

*Silkville – Main Building (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*



*Silkville – the de Boissiere Odd Fellows' Orphans Home (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*



*Silkville – ruins of de Boissiere's house. (The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka).*

## Footnotes

[1] Wayne E. Gilliand, ed., *Reflections of Franklin County and Chautauqua Days*(Ottawa, Ks.: Ottawa Chamber of Commerce), pp. 32-33.

[2] Garrett R. Carpenter, "Silkville: A Kansas Attempt in the History of Fourierist Utopias, 1869-1892," *Emporia State Research Studies*, 3 (December 1954), p. 4; George A. Huron, "Ernest Valeton Boissiere," *Kansas State Historical Society Transactions* 3 (1901-1902): 552-553; Weeks, p. 40-41.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Carpenter, pp. 13-16; Grace Cable Kercher, "Silkville – Colony of Dreams," *Commonground* 5 (Summer 1945): 86-91.

[5] Carpenter, pp. 13-16; Weeks, pp. 40-41; W.M. Raymond, "Silkville Commune," *Seminary Notes* 2 (October 1892), p. 163.

[6] Gilliand, p. 32; Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1965): 375-82; Carpenter, pp. 13-16; Weeks, pp. 42-43; Kercher, pp. 87-88.

[7] Carpenter, p. 18; Kercher, p. 87.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Kercher, pp. 88-89.

[10] Carpenter, pp. 22-24.

[11] Carpenter, p. 24.

[12] Ernest Dewey, "Silkville in Wheat Country," *Hutchinson News Herald*, Hutchinson, Kansas, August 21, 1950; Paul L. Wellman, "Only Mulberry Trees Outlive the Colony of Grand Dreams A Frenchman Set Up in Kansas," *Kansas City Star*, April 19, 1942.

[13] "The Rise and Fall of the Silk Industry in Kansas," *Kansas City Star*, April 28, 1929; Mrs. John Sponable, "Silkville," six-page pamphlet published by the Woman's Kansas Day Club, second district, 1951; contains interview with Anna Laura Fritts, who lived at Silkville; Carpenter, p. 27; Kercher, p. 88.

[14] *Williamsburg Weekly Gazette*, July 16, 1880.

[15] *Ibid.*, March 10, 1882.

[16] Carpenter, p. 29.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29; Kercher, p. 90.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Atchison Globe*, Atchison, Kansas, May 4, 1916; Kercher, p. 91.

[21] Kercher, pp. 90-91.

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# The Structures of Everyday Life in a French Utopian Settlement in Iowa: The Case of the Icarians of Adams County (1853-1898)

by André Prévos

The settlement of a group of French Utopians in the southwestern part of the state of Iowa in the early 1850s marked the coming of the only significantly large group of French immigrants to that state during the 19th century. It also marked a major step in the history of this Utopian movement. Even though this group was neither the first nor the largest group of Utopians and Communists to settle in Iowa, it is nevertheless true that its evolution and its demise were not particularly different from those of other Utopian communities in Iowa – and elsewhere.[1]

The doctrine of Icarian Communism, or Icarianism, was the brainchild of Etienne Cabet, a Frenchman, born in Dijon on New Year's Day, 1788. During the 1830s, he formulated his philosophy of Icarian Communism and popularized it following the example of Thomas More – by writing a fictionalized version of the life in such a community. The *Voyage en Icarie*,[2] published in 1840, became extremely popular in France, and Cabet was pressed by his thousands of followers to find a place where Icaria could really be built and made to work for the good of its members. After much uncertainty, Cabet decided, in 1848, to start a settlement in Texas. Sixty-nine men were sent to prepare the land for the arrival of hundreds of others. This experiment ended in utter disaster.[3] After regrouping in New Orleans, the few hundred Icarians who were still willing to follow Cabet sailed northward to Nauvoo, Illinois, where they bought lands and some of the buildings vacated by the Mormons after they had been forced to leave.[4] The years 1850-1855 in Nauvoo were rather uneventful, and the community survived because of hard work and sacrifices. In 1855-1856, troubles erupted, a split occurred within the group; Cabet and his *fidels* moved to Cheltenham, near Saint Louis, where Cabet died immediately afterward. The other group of Icarians moved to Iowa where lands had been bought by Cabet in the name of the community during the years 1851-1854.[5] As early as 1853, groups of Icarians regularly spent time in Adams County, building log cabins and sheds, as well as clearing land, in order to prepare for the creation of another Icarian settlement. [Figures 1 and 2].

The Icarian presence in Iowa was to last until 1898. During the second half of the 19th century, the small French community (never more than 150 individuals) would first grow moderately until the early 1860s, then significantly prosper until the 1870s, undergo uneasiness and division in the late 1870s and, finally, spend the 1880s and the 1890s in relative obscurity – losing some of its younger members until the old Icarians remaining there decided to disband and share the property of the community before returning to "individual" life.[6]

Instead of detailing the successive events which marked the history of the Icarian settlement in Adams County, Iowa, I have chosen to focus on the so-called structures of the everyday life of this community.[7] These structures, instead of being punctual and haphazardly distributed, as most historical events are, can be seen, instead, as the evident manifestations of the continuity of the lifestyle despite, or, at times, in reaction to, the events which create milestones in the history of the community. In the present case, it was decided to focus on three of these structures: the ideological structure, the occupational structure, and the physical structure – with particular emphasis on housing.

## The Ideological Structure

Before assessing the peculiarities of the Icarian Communist philosophy, it may well be indicated to underline the fact that the numbers of individuals who followed this lifestyle were quite small and that the Icarian communities in Iowa never housed large numbers of guests – or members. The 1856 census of Adams County shows that only 67 French-born individuals lived in Quincy Township where the Icarian village was located; this number was down to 54 in 1860; to 51 by 1870 and, when the group disbanded, the assets were divided among 16 adults and 10 children.[8] As the years went by, it is clear that not all members were born in France and that American-born members should be added to the original French-born Icarians. However, all things considered, it has been recognized that there were never more than between 90 and 150 members of the Icarian Community in Adams County during the 1853-1898 years. The highest numbers were found in the 1870s while, after the early 1880s, decline was irreversible and led to disbanding.

The philosophical inspirations of Icarian Communism, also known as Icarianism, are threefold: Christianity, traditional Utopianism, and the French Revolution pattern.[9] The major document available for the characterization of Icarianism remains the *Voyage en Icarie*. As has already been mentioned, this is a work of fiction in the tradition of More's *Utopia*, but it is also possible to distinguish more typically French sources of inspiration such as the strong Rousseauist influence in the dialog, plot, and general organization. References to Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* are particularly evident throughout the first half of the *Voyage*,[10] while the second, less "fictional" half, is devoted in majority to a debate between the Icarians and several strangers who have not yet been convinced of the superiority of the Icarian lifestyle.

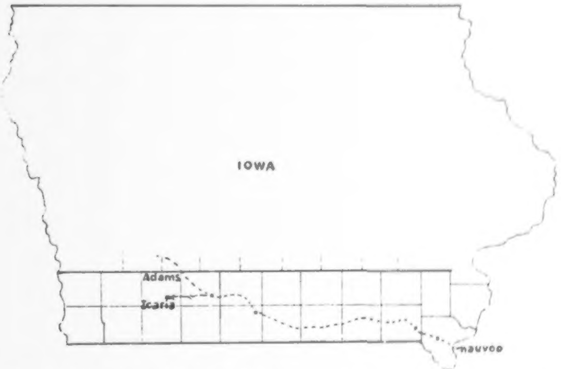

*Fig. 1. Location of the Icarian community lands in Iowa. [---] indicates the Mormon Trail, [—] indicates the Icarian Trail.*

The organizational principles of Icarianism include, at first, a need for a new beginning in an entirely new and unspoiled place: the land purchases in Iowa may be seen as an effort in this direction, an attempt at starting anew in an untouched environment which could thus be easier to mold or transform according to Icarian guidelines; also, the members would not be tempted by occurrences beyond the limits of the settlement since there were no close neighbors for the Icarians in Adams County in the early 1850s.

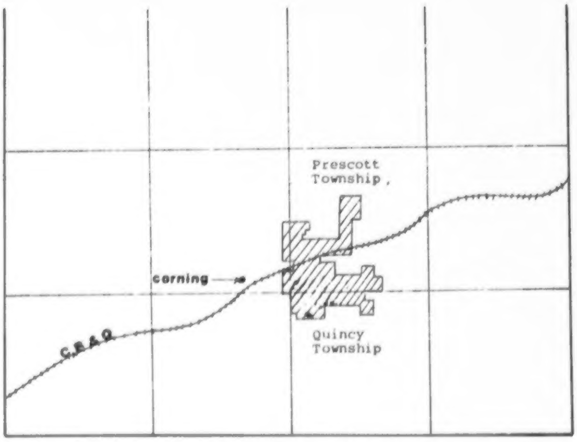

*Fig. 2. Distribution of Icarian lands in Adams County, Iowa.*

In Icaria, individual property did not exist; instead, the community itself owned everything.[11] This introduced a perfect equality among all the members who owned everything – and nothing at the same time. On another level, this equality may be seen as an insuperable element against liberty since all decisions taken by a group of equally important individuals for the good of all the community and the well-being of its members have to be accepted without the possibility of ever skirting them – equality of all members did not allow for special considerations. The community's governing body thus became a type of all-powerful and all-knowing decision agent.[12] In order to make the all-encompassing power of the community more acceptable to its members, the ideal of fraternity was strongly emphasized: fraternity became the "science, principle, doctrine, theory, and system" of the Icarians.[13] This fraternity leads, according to Cabet, from a better distribution of real property within the community to a much higher idea, namely the institution of a religious system where God and Nature become integrated into one entity. This religion was expressed in three basic teachings: "Love thy neighbor as thyself," "Do not do unto others harm that thyself would not accept," "Do unto others all the good you desire for yourself."[14]

In a society where the centralized decision-making bodies accept the duty of caring for the well-being of all the citizens, political organizations must be carefully organized. In Icaria, the elected representatives (the universal suffrage is the mode of election) are organized in committees, each one in charge of an administrative section (constitution, education, agriculture, food, housing, etc.).[15] This organizational scheme is also used to select, staff and organize provincial and local assemblies to relay the decisions of the higher decision-making bodies and also regulate the regional and local lifestyles. This type of government is quite similar to the one created, during the French Revolution years, by the Constitution of 1793.

These general principles would be applied in Iowa and, in their governmental setup, the communities would closely follow the Icarian principles as well as their small numbers would allow. These general principles should not dissimulate the more practically minded sections of the Icarian doctrine because the latter are those which will more evidently influence the everyday life of the Icarians in Iowa. The community is the sole organizer and, through its decisions, taken after consultations, discussion and vote, becomes responsible for the intrinsic characeristics of the lifestyle of its members. It could be said that the Icarian conception of community was that of a colossal extension of the nuclear family of the times: once the tasks had been attributed, the harvests were gathered and redistributed according to the needs of each member. One was not free to do what one wanted but, instead, one had to do what one was told in order to ensure the survival of the entire group (here is another vivid illustration of the quasi-absence of liberty and of the all-dominating need for fraternity). A related factor is that all occupations were considered equal – whether doctor or blacksmith – because they all contributed to the survival of the community by ensuring that of its members. Work was also deemed compulsory: all members – according to age, education and individual characteristics – had to fulfill the tasks assigned to them in order to ensure the smooth working of the community and allow the production of all the needed resources.[16] Since all able-bodied members had to work, they were spared the need to prepare their meals at home by having a public meal service available: all workers ate together at the same time (this will be continued in Iowa and the refectory will be one of the most important buildings in the village structure as will be seen later). In Icaria, according to Cabet, everyone dressed according to the decrees, and outlandish clothing was banned. All members were to follow dress guidelines which encouraged a type of clothing uniform for all ages, to be worn during work or rest.

Popular assemblies, common meals and collective distractions represent the public aspect of the everyday life described by Cabet in his novel. What ideals were going to guide the private life of the Icarians? Cabet's sexual morals were strict; marriage was the only acceptable way to enjoy sexual relations, and it was strongly encouraged among Icarians; divorce was allowed only in a few cases.[17] The individual family was perceived as the center of private life, just as the community was perceived as a large family. The position of women in the Icarian society was quite below that of the men. A man could vote, a woman could not; he could be elected to commissions, she could not. As for occupations, women were most often found in already recognized feminine occupations: sewing, cooking, washing. One aspect of the life of Icarian women had to do with children raising. Until the children were 5 years of age, they lived with their parents but, at age 5, they went to live with other schoolchildren away from their parents who were only to see them on weekends.[18] This underlines the emphasis on education found in the Icarian doctrine (both for boys and girls).

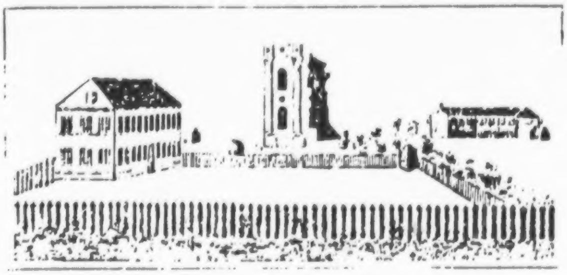

*Fig. 3. The Icarian school (left) and refectory (right), Nauvoo, Illinois.* Source: Harper Monthly, *No. 110 (December 1904).*

If in Iowa this aspect was seldom found due to the small number of children, the Nauvoo school building was a good reminder of the importance of education for the Icarians: it was one of the largest and most sturdy buildings in Nauvoo (cf. Figure 3), while the schoolhouse was only one of the first buildings erected in Iowa – but not the most remarkable.

From 1849 until 1856, Cabet and the Icarians lived in Nauvoo, Illinois, and, with only minor changes brought to the Icarian doctrine, tried to pattern their lifestyle and their everyday activities according to the Icarian ideal. This was not always easy and, at times, made even less acceptable because of the hard work and sacrifices that the Icarians had to endure in order to survive. After the upheaval and the division in 1856, the new majority decided to move into Iowa where, it is thought, Cabet planned to remove the entire colony. Those who came to Iowa still followed the basic Icarian teachings, and their everyday life was thus shaped by the doctrine outlined above. The following section will focus on the occupational aspect of the life of the Iowa Icarians in a

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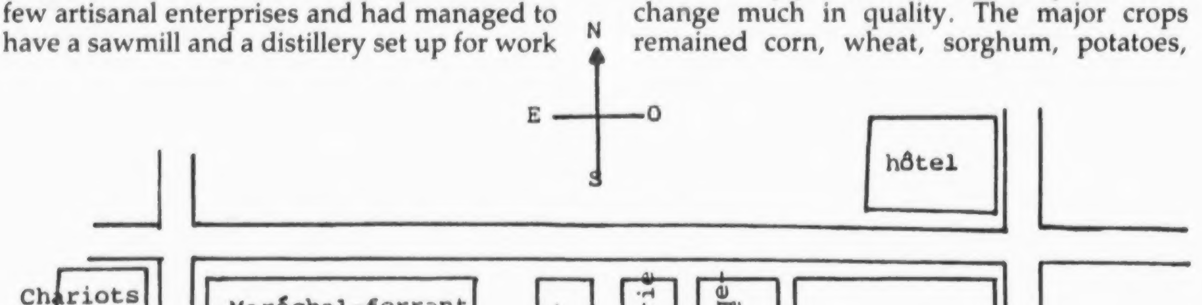
community designed according to Icarian precepts where members were to live following Cabet's recommendations.

## The Occupational Structure

As early as 1853, small groups of Icarians from Nauvoo came to Adams County in order to prepare the newly acquired site for settlement. For Cabet, the Iowa settlement was conceived as "an accessory, a workshop, a commission in the interest of the community, to prepare, facilitate and realize the Icarian Community."[19] Those who moved into Adams County were among the very first settlers in that part of Iowa. Their efforts were often hampered by the harsh climate and by the lack of resources at their disposal. By 1856, several log houses, barns and sheds had been built in order to house the first settlers from Nauvoo; by 1860, the Iowa settlement was entirely on its own after the last of the Nauvoo properties were finally sold.

In his *Voyage*, Cabet had envisioned a combination of agriculture and industry in Icaria; he had tried, in Nauvoo, to establish a few artisanal enterprises and had managed to have a sawmill and a distillery set up for work for the neighboring communities (not only for the Icarians themselves); few other artisans worked both for the Icarians and their American neighbors (cf. Figure 4). In Iowa, from the very start, the community's energies were oriented toward farming, cattle raising, fruit growing and wine making, complemented by gardening and minor self-sustaining artisanal work (leather smithing for shoes and horse and oxen harnesses, for example).[20] At first, the Icarian settlement in Iowa did not differ much from other settlements of newly arrived immigrants. By 1860, the Icarians had managed to harvest 500 bushels of wheat, 2,945 bushels of Indian corn, 500 bushels of oats, 75 bushels of Irish potatoes and 30 tons of hay. Moreover, the livestock was composed of 19 horses, 35 milk cows, 29 working oxen, 37 "other cattle," 130 sheep and 300 swine which produced 300 pounds of wool, 250 pounds of butter, and meat estimated at $32. Other miscellaneous productions included cheeses and 12 gallons of molasses from sorghum. The Icarians cultivated 360 acres and owned 2,759 acres of unimproved land.[21]

For many years, the Icarian output did not change much in quality. The major crops remained corn, wheat, sorghum, potatoes,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Parc et Jardin
Maison du Cabet
Infirmerie
Pharmacie
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Lavoir
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*Fig. 4. Map of the Icarian Village, Nauvoo, Illinois. [Conjectural Drawing].*

other types of vegetables and fruit from the orchards, including an extensive patch of strawberries. The unimproved lands were either pastures where the livestock was parked or woods from which were taken trees for lumber, fencing and firewood. The 1860-1870 years were marked by a progressive development due to the new demand for wool caused by the Civil War. Besides wool, other Icarian products included wheat flour ground at the Icarian mill, cheese sold at neighboring Corning or at nearby fairs, and custom sawing when the sawmill was functioning (this was one of the worst problems of the Icarians who could never create a reliable source of energy for their sawmill).[22] As years went by, there was a progressive change from extensive farming to livestock raising; by 1885, corn had become the principal crop and was used to raise horses, oxen and pigs.[23] From the productions of the Icarians, it is evident that they did not markedly differ from their neighbors who progressively settled in Adams County; in addition, it is also clear that the "industrial" aspect of the community was very limited – the Icarians were primarily farmers and stock raisers, like most other farmers in Iowa in the 19th century.

If the productions of the Icarians were not strikingly different from what could be expected of 19th-century Iowa farmers, other aspects of their lifestyles were more original. First of all, the Icarian farms were owned by the community – as was everything on the settlement – and farming was organized by an elected commission under the control of the director of agriculture. Men whose duties included farming were divided into groups, and each group was in charge of a well-defined set of occupations, depending on the season: plowing, cattle raising, sheep tending, cheese and butter making. Second, there were a few details which helped differentiate the Icarians from their neighbors. Their dress differentiated them, as first, from the other farmers. Icarians dressed plainly and uniformly in simple colors – both men and women had similar clothing in different seasons and the patterns were often selected by the members of the Clothing Committee. In addition, during the 1860s at least, the Icarians spoke rarely with their neighbors because they seldom understood English; they had been speaking French among themselves since their arrival in America and only a handful had learned enough English to be able to interact efficiently with the Americans nearby. Finally, grape growing and wine making were activities which were more typically French than those of their neighbors and helped separate the Icarians from the other farmers. This should not be understood as an effort of isolation on the part of the Icarians, however. The language barrier became less and less of a problem and, since the Icarians did not heavily proselytize their Communistic ideals, they did not alienate their neighbors. For the latter, the Icarians were, first, dedicated and courageous farmers like the others and, second, had idiosyncratic characteristics which did not clash with the prevailing traditions of the time. Icarians and their neighbors thus did get along well.

Among the idiosyncratic characteristics of the Icarian lifestyle it is easy to recognize the illustration of the Icarian teachings. The principles of communism governed their lives, fraternity was always emphasized, but religious freedom was tolerated. Profits derived from the sale of grain or other surplus products were delegated to the communal treasury. Necessities, including clothing, books and farming implements, were purchased from these funds. The communistic element in the community's administration was also closely related to Icarian doctrine. It has already been seen that agriculture was under the control of an elected commission, the same was true of many other aspects of Icarian life. The community itself was governed by a Board of Directors and a president, elected each year on the third of February. The president handled all cash transactions for the community after he had received an endorsement from a majority of the voting members – men who were full members, women were not allowed to vote, except in minor or so-called "women-related" issues. The secretary-treasurer's major obligation was bookkeeping and recording of meetings. The director of industry supervised the buildings, fences and the mill. The director of clothing and lodging was usually a woman – the only governing post opened to women – and the duties included ordering and purchasing supplies for the Icarians' clothing and personal needs.

If men were in charge of cultivating the property and raising livestock, Icarian women were mostly in charge of clothing, cooking and laundering. All the clothes were sewn by women of the community according to patterns agreed upon during meetings under the supervision of the director of clothing. In 1868, a sewing machine was bought by the community. Women usually worked in pairs and their duties were rotated weekly. Clothes were, at first, washed according to the French tradition: they were stacked in a large vat, and hot water with sifted ashes was poured again and again into the vat. In the early 1870s a kind of "mechanical washing machine" was built; it consisted of several barrels with hinged slats inside, which turned on a rotating axis placed diagonally. This system was operated by horse power, and a nearby steam boiler supplied hot water.[24]

As for children, between the ages of 5 and 16, they were supposed to go to school; first, the Icarians built their own school and staffed it with members of the community. In later years, Icarian teachers also taught the sons and daughters of neighboring Americans even after the creation of the Corning School District, as the case of Hortense Montaldo illustrates. She became the local school teacher after having taught Icarian children but, as a good Icarian, she deposited her salary in the community's till.[25] When they were free, children played on the community's grounds, but when work was abundant, they were taken to the fields to help with light chores such as picking potato bugs.[26]

The industrial and artisanal productions of the community also required steady work in workshops where clogs and shoes were made by citizens Mignot and Bronner; the water carrier for the community was Citizen Meindre; Citizen Cotteron was the blacksmith while Citizen Marchand, one of the original group who went into Texas in 1848, was in charge of soapmaking and pharmaceutical products while serving as the editor of the *Revue Icarienne* – the journal published by the community.[27]

Other aspects of Icarianism were found in the effort at communal entertainment and distraction on the weekends and festivals. On Sundays, there were no religious services on the community grounds, but few members went to nearby Corning to attend services. In the afternoons, the community often organized presentations of short plays or, at times, excerpts from operas. American neighbors sometimes attended and were welcomed by the Icarians. What pleased the Americans in particular were the Icarian dances since few musicians were to be found in the region at the time. The Icarians decided to charge for attendance and thus managed to earn a few more needed dollars from the neighboring Americans who did not object to pay, as long as the music was to their liking. The Icarians also organized picnics for the community and fishing parties in the nearby woods along the Nodaway River. The Icarians also followed more traditional customs by celebrating Christmas (not as a religious festival – a sort of anticipation of what Christmas has become nowadays). On the first day of the year they celebrated the New Year by following the French tradition of *souhaiter la bonne année* by going from door to door and offering their wishes, in return for an expected gift. They celebrated on the Third of February to commemorate the first departure of the Icarians for America, but they also celebrated the Fourth of July like most of the other farmers of Adams County. If the distractions and the festivals of the Icarians reflect French tradition, Icarian teachings and American acculturative forces, the same holds true of their *rites de passage* and agricultural festivals. Every fall they celebrated the *fête du maís* [corn harvest festival]. The life of the Icarians was marked by three major ceremonies: at birth and death there were civil ceremonies to celebrate or express regrets, and marriage was an important step in the life of the Icarians when the whole community rejoiced and celebrated.

When a rapid scan of the occupational structures of the Icarian is completed, it becomes evident that three major factors led to the characterization of this structure: the Icarian teachings were at the core of everyday life of the Icarians it is true, but one cannot help but notice the survival of French traditions as well as the already evident presence of acculturative forces brought by the presence of American neighbors. Free interaction with the latter will lead the Icarians to let themselves be more open to greater influence from the environment: as the years will pass, the Icarians will become fluent in English and, at the same time, will become more noticeable in the local agricultural activities such as county fairs and livestock expositions where they will not only participate but earn distinctions as well (ribbons and first-place certificates for fruits, cheese, livestock, etc., will become more and more common for Icarians).[28]

The presence of these three forces will also be found when one considers the organization, design, building and use of the several types of Icarian buildings found in Iowa.

## The Physical Structure

In all groups the design and arrangements of housing structures has been the duty of recognizable individuals within the general society, from kings to bourgeois to professionals. The same could be said of Utopian cities and villages: they were designed according to ideals described in the doctrine and according to the number and occupations of the members of the community. Studies of Utopian settlements have often been made easy by the fact that a large number of the original buildings were still standing at their original places of construction, thus allowing the researcher a firsthand experience and a comparatively easy task of comparing the actual buildings, their size, style and geographical arrangements, with the dicta of the founders of the movement.[29]

Such an approach is impossible in the present case since the great majority of the original Icarian buildings in Iowa have either disappeared, have been relocated and remodeled or have been allowed to wither away unattended. Consequently, when looking for both housing design and building as well as geographical distribution and overall organization of the Icarian villages, only secondhand sources are available to the researcher. On the other hand, since the Icarian villages in Iowa were small, and since there have been many descriptions both by visitors and members of the community, it has been possible to recreate a map of the villages, as well as drawings (here called conjectural drawings) which, it is thought, provide an accurate description of both village design and construction design in the case of the Iowa Icarian Villages (the Nauvoo, Illinois, village is not dealt with here because, first, it was not entirely built by Icarians and, second, the Iowa community allowed for a good illustration of a true Icarian-designed and Icarian-built community, thanks to the remarkable amount of detailed documentation available in both archives and autobiographical writings of the members).[30]

When the first advance groups of Icarians moved into Adams County in the early 1850s, they found themselves far from any marketplace and had to manage with the resources found on their land, as well as with the items that they had brought from Illinois. This state of things applied, in particular, to the availability of materials for construction. The southwestern regions of the state of Iowa were not part of the sod house construction area, and the Icarians had to build log houses. The first buildings on the Icarian lands were log houses and log buildings covered with shingles held to the roof-beams with poles (the nailing of shingles was to come later when shorter shingles could be obtained). This construction technique was not peculiar to the Icarians; all the early settlers in this part of Iowa built log cabins and log buildings; it was only west of the Missouri River that sod houses were common and attractive because of the drier climate.

If the building materials and techniques were not special, the disposition of the buildings was influenced by several factors. First, one could say that the village design with a central square where communal life focuses harks back to rural France and rural Burgundy where Cabet was born. This type of geographical distribution of village houses was, in fact, one of the village types found in rural France and quite common in the northeastern regions of France. The second influence had to do with the urban landscape found in the *Voyage to Icarie*. Here, Cabet indicates that the houses are "disposed with elegant symmetry" and "arranged together for the agreement of the eyes and for the easy maintenance of public order."[31] One thing also characterizes Icarian buildings: they are simple, airy, clean and seem to have banished any trace of useless luxury or of overdecoration from both the outside as well as the inside.[32] These influences on the design of the Icarian village were to be found in Iowa, in particular in the presence of a noticeable communal building, surrounded by individual houses while the buildings reserved for livestock or agriculture will be built on the periphery of the village.

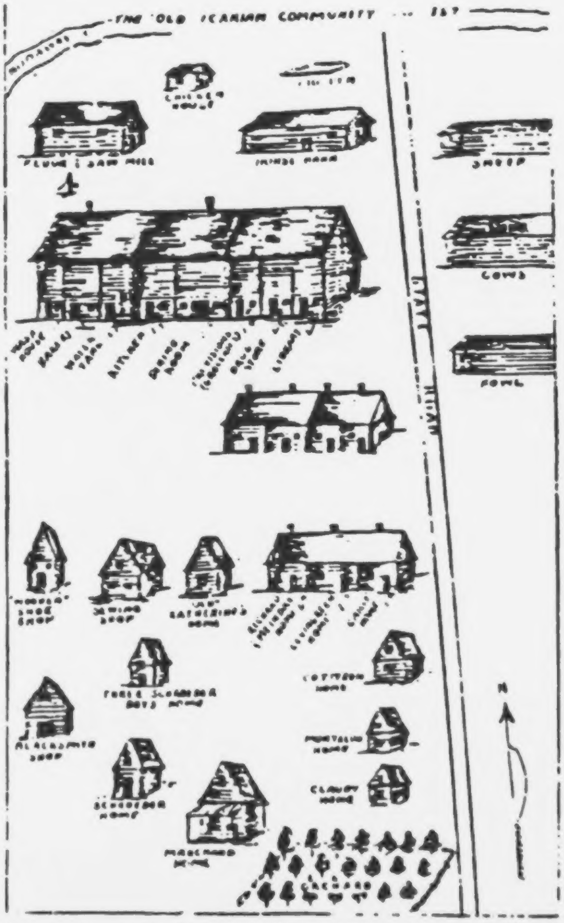

*Fig. 5. Map of the Icarian village in 1857.* Source: *Dolores Hayden,* Seven American Utopias *(Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1976), p. 327.*

From the available documents it has been possible to reconstruct the first map of the original Icarian village. Figure 5 shows that most individual houses were reserved for one single family or a group of individuals while only one multi-family building was found. On the other hand, the artisans' workshops were grouped together in the lower level of the communal building which served both as a communal dining room and kitchen as well as meeting room, library and theatre. All the individual buildings were on one side of the communal building while the stables, pens and barns were on the other side, thus marking a clear separation between living and working quarters.

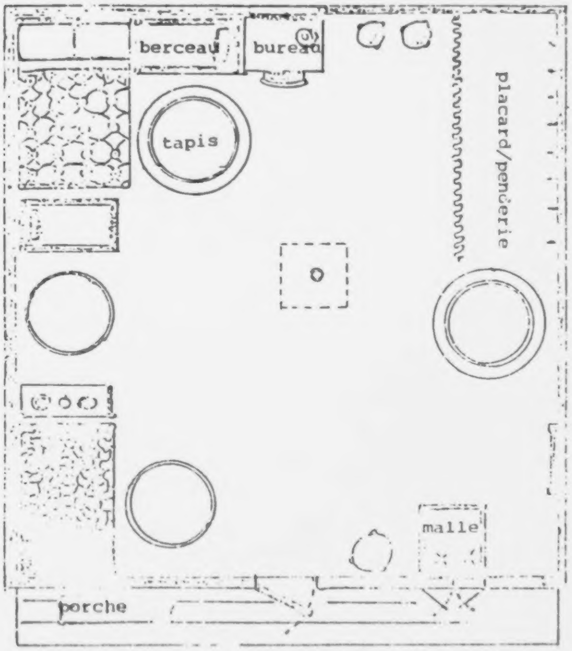

*Fig. 6. Plan of the Marchand log cabin. [Conjectural drawing]*

The first stage of the Icarian village does not exhibit many striking characteristics beyond its evident resemblance to many of the other early Iowa villages: a few log cabins and sheds arranged along a road. Of these buildings little has survived because they were soon replaced by more modern and more comfortable buildings which were going to give the Icarian village a more unmistakably particular aspect. But, from the documents available, and principally the autobiography of Marie Marchand Ross,[33] it has been possible to draw a conjectural plan of the Marchand log cabin (it appears on the village map at the southern end of the village). The one-room log house used by the Marchand family was about 22 by 20 feet, built of squared logs with the spaces in between the logs filled with mud. The inside of the house was whitewashed. On the back of the building was a window and, on the front, a window and a door. The floor was a "puncheon floor" with split logs directly on the ground, the bark side in contact with the earth. Since the Icarians took their meals in common in the communal building, there was no need for a stove, except in winter for heating the room. The entire family lived in the room: the parents slept in one bed, the two sons in the other and the baby in the crib. Furniture was sparse, as was the case in all the farmers' log cabins at the time: a trunk for clothes, a small writing desk under the back window, a low table, a few stools were the only furniture found in the Marchand house; a closet, separated from the rest of the room by a curtain was used both for hanging clothes and, also, as a dressing and undressing corner to ensure privacy for parents and children. A few rugs completed the decoration of the house. This log cabin had a porch where a bench was attached to the wall, allowing members of the family to sit down in the shade after a hard day's work[34] (Figure 6).

Figure 7 reproduces the two sides of a hand-drawn map of the Icarian village drawn by a former member and deposited in the Icarian Archives of the Department of Museum and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa. It represents the second stage to the Icarian village, likely between the early 1860s and the mid-1870s. As the legend indicates, the original log houses were still standing, but new houses had been built. These were no longer log cabins but, instead, were built following the balloon-frame

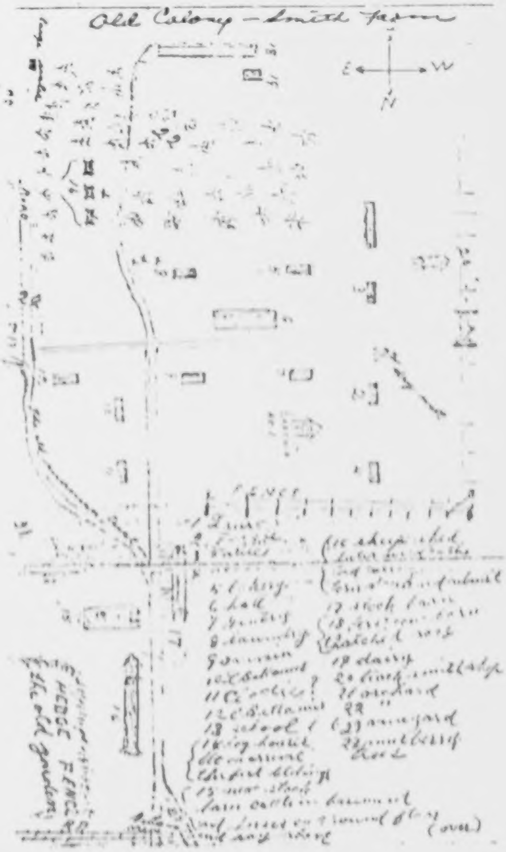

*Fig. 7. Map of Icarian village. Drawn by a Former Member of the Community. Recto. Source: Icarian Archives, Des Moines, Iowa.*

design which was gaining in popularity with the availability of precut lumber after the construction of roads and the creation of markets in the newly established towns. Here, too, the building technique is not strikingly different from that of other Iowans at the time, but, on the other hand, it becomes more clear that the village design was closer to the Utopian designs found in Cabet's work and in other Utopian village designs in America: the communal building at the center of the village and the houses arranged along parallel and perpendicular lines (a gridiron pattern) around it, with the barns, stables and sheds separated from the village itself. A separation between living quarters and "working" quarters is now evident. The frame houses housed two to four families, depending on the respective sizes of the families and the buildings, while the community building still houses the kitchen and food stores in the basement, the dining room/meeting room on the first floor and several rooms on the second floor, the largest used as a sewing workshop and the library reading room, the smallest ones as sleeping rooms for the widowed or single members.[35]

Figure 8 reproduces the conjectural drawing of one of the family houses of the Icarian community: the floor plan was similar to the other frame houses built at the time, each floor divided into two halves by a stairway/hallway combination. It is thought that the Icarians built several houses with only two rooms on each floor and others with four rooms in order to accommodate larger or smaller families as well as childless couples. It is also known that some of these frame houses had only one floor with an attic, but the floor plan was similar and the estimated dimensions are about 22 feet by 14 feet – not unlike many other houses found at the time. As to the furniture, it is thought that it was not much different from that found in the Marchand home: beds, a few seats (chairs or stools), a table, a few trunks and several rugs made up the majority of the furniture. A stove was added in the winter. Again, these houses were more like a dormitory than a family home since the Icarians worked during the day, took all their meals in common and often spent their free time together in the community building.[36]

The year 1876 marked the beginning of a period of upheaval among the Icarians and, after the storm had passed, the community was left divided. One faction decided to move away from the village and build a new village on an entirely new site about a mile from the original village. the New Icarian Community, as it came to be called, was made up of most of those who had originally seceded from Cabet and, in turn, had found themselves rejected by younger and more radical members.[37] Consequently, the village of the New Icarian Community, may be seen as the last step in Icarian village design in Iowa and, possibly because of its small size, one of the easiest to study and characterize.

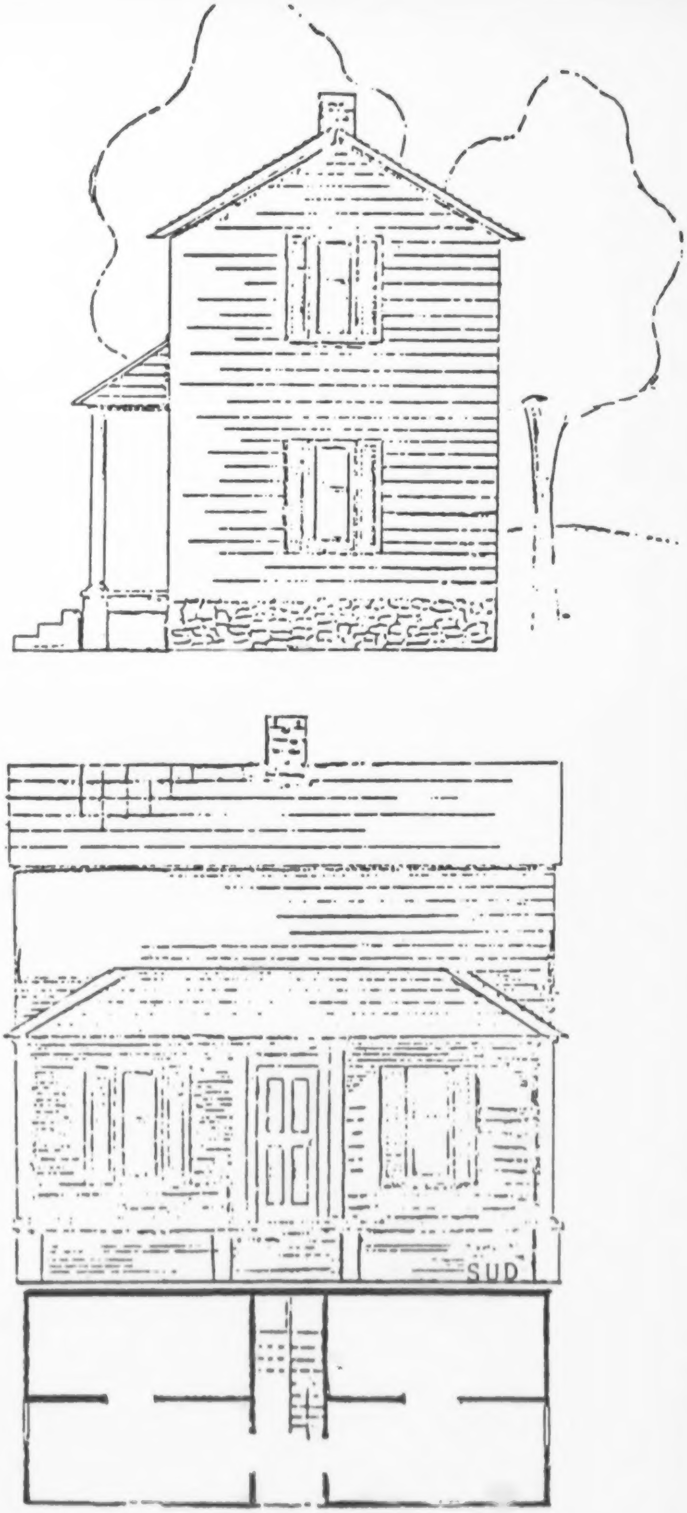

*Fig. 8. Floor plan and exterior views of houses of the Icarian community. [Conjectural drawing]*

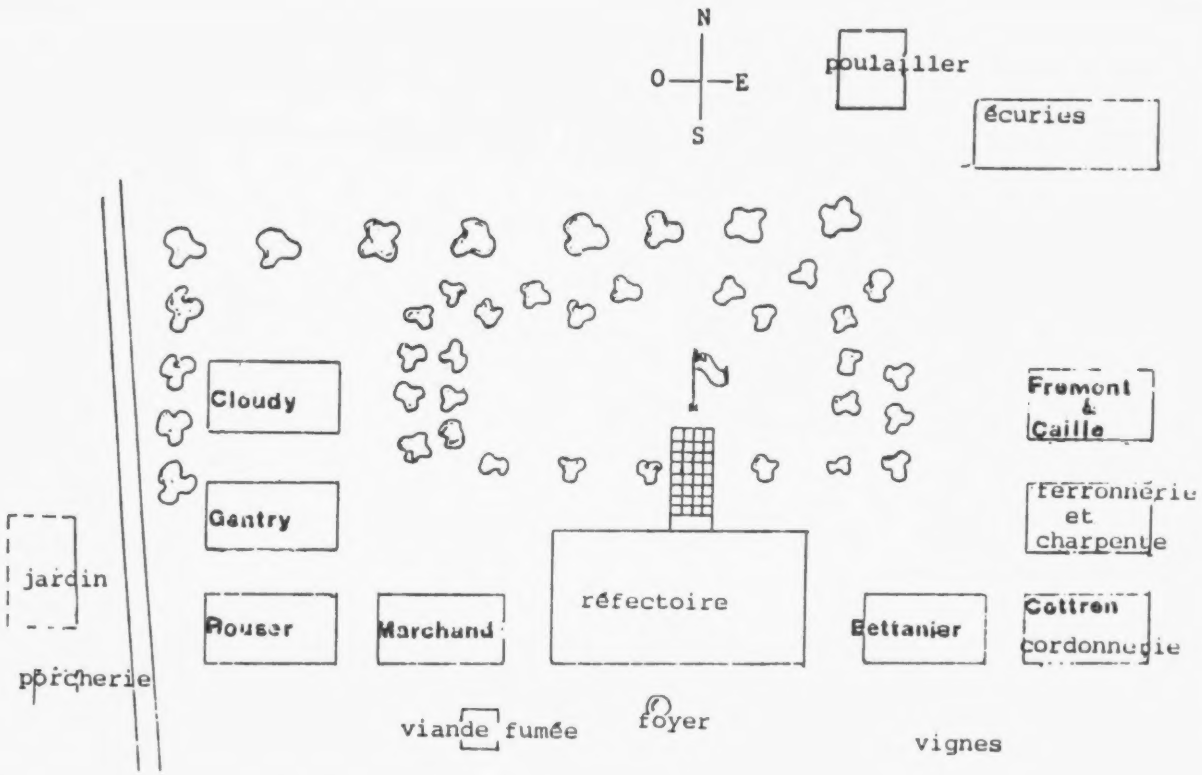

*Fig. 9. Map of the village of the New Icarian Community (1880-1898).*

Figure 9 is a reconstitution of the disposition of the living quarters of the village of the New Icarian Community. It is evident that the position of the communal building illustrates its key role in the everyday life of the Icarians while the disposition of the houses also reminds us of the traditional French central square. It is also a good illustration of the efforts to isolate the living quarters from the working quarters by having the stables and sheds on the periphery of the village and the central square shaded with trees (which also prevented the Icarians from seeing the stables and the chicken shacks beyond the open side of the square). As has been seen earlier, the New Icarian Community was mostly a cattle-raising community, and the small number of members also influenced the number of workshops and sheds. One more characteristic needs to be added: the members of the new Icarian colony flew an American flag in the center of the square in front of the communal building – an illustration of the pervasiveness of the acculturative forces at work among the community as well as a good index to the lack of energy it could devote to the preservation of French traditions. The buildings found in the village of the New Icarian Community were built by American artisans and reflected the dominating techniques used by American builders at that time, but, also, indicate the unmistakable presence of an Icarian influence. The case of the Icarian refectory/communal building will provide a good illustration of this fact.

As has been said, the communal building represented the heart of the Icarian community: the members took all their meals together in the refectory which, once tables had been put on the side and benches brought in, could double as a theater hall or, if needed, once cleared of its furniture, as a dance hall. Such was the refectory/communal building built by the New Icarian Community. Figure 10 indicates the floor plan of the first and second floors. The basement was evenly divided into storage and food-keeping rooms. The first floor (about 30 by 15 feet) was divided into two unequal areas. The smaller one was the cooking area while the larger was the dining room/meeting room area. The change of floor plan was due to the fact that the membership was small and that there was no need to have the kitchen in the basement and the plates lifted to the dining room by a dumbwaiter as in the communal building of the original village. Access to the ground floor was through at least three doors (the Icarians, like their contemporaries, were aware that, in case of fire, the number of exits was very important) on both sides of the building. The second floor was divided into rooms of various sizes, some were used as workshops for the women, one was reserved for the library of the community

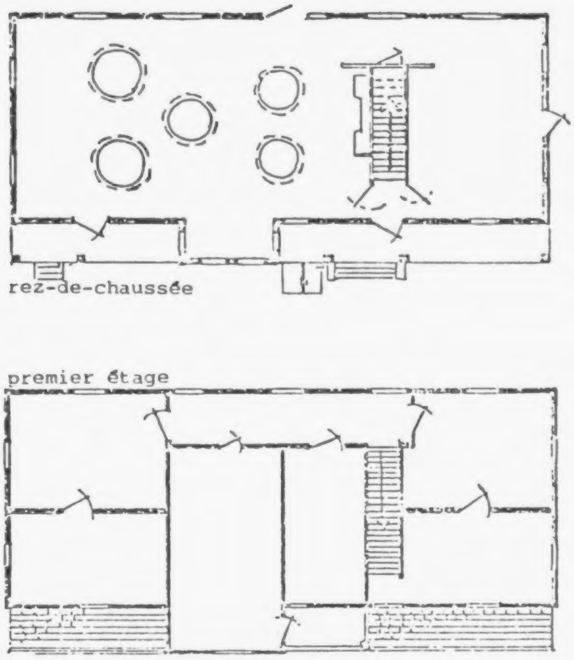

*Fig. 10. Floor plan of the Communal Building of the New Icarian Community. [Conjectural drawing]*

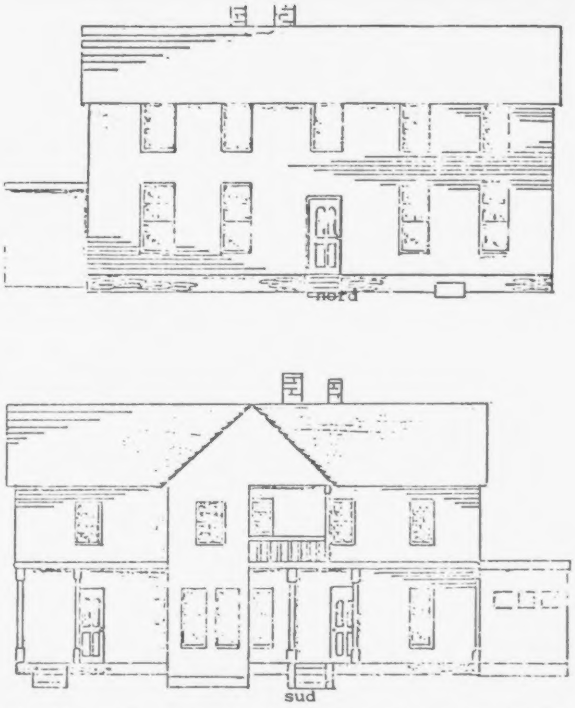

*Fig. 11. Northern and southern sides of the New Icarian Community communal building. [Conjectural drawing]*

and others housed single or widowed male members of the community. The conjectural drawing of both the southern and northern sides of the building shows a noticeable difference in styles. The northern face is very plain while the southern one has a porch running along it and includes a kind of built-in square tower which is very similar to the type found in traditional Norman houses in France. In addition, the small balcony on the second floor added a touch of originality in the design. The small lean-to addition on the eastern end of the building housed the stoves of the kitchen and was used as part of the kitchen area; this type of lean-to kitchen has often been associated with the Louisiana French and Creole building found in Lousiana and in New Orleans. A possible reason for the presence of this addition could have originated during the Icarian presence in the Louisiana capital in the late months of 1848 and early months of 1849.[38] Here too, it is easy to find several possible influences in the shape and design of the building: the traditionally Utopian (communal use and central position), the shapes inherited from France and French-influenced cultures (Normandy and Louisiana), and those influenced by the neighboring buildings (balloon frame, construction materials and techniques). In addition to the building, it has been possible to find enough details allowing for a characterization of its furniture and interior aspect. As the conjectural drawing shows (Figure 12) there are two types of doors, both with square door jambs, but one with rectangular panels and another with rounded top panels; the windows were not French windows but standard windows. The tables used in the refectory of the New Icarian Community have been built by Icarian artisans: there were round tables with simple and clean lines; the accompanying chairs, also built by the Icarian craftsmen were round-back chairs of simple forms. Even though it is difficult to find direct influences in the style of the Icarian furniture – primarily because of the scarcity of details available – one is tempted to assign a certain Biedermeierian influence to the Icarian furniture, which would also be quite in agreement with the Icarian doctrine regarding art and other aspects of everyday life: a clear concern for utility and simplicity of form.[39]

## Conclusion

The preceding survey of the elements which structured the everyday life of the Icarians in Adams County, Iowa, during the second half of the nineteenth century allows a better understanding of their occupations, their pleasures and hardships, as well as some of the problems which led to their ultimate demise. The Icarian philosophy was quite different from the prevailing popular ideals shared by nineteenth-century Americans for whom Socialism was — if known — perceived as an evil doctrine. But, since their numbers and their insistence never were such that the Icarians could be perceived as a threat to their neighbors (as had been the case with the Mormons in Nauvoo in the 1840s), the Icarians were accepted by the latter. One supplementary reason for their acceptance was the fact that their everyday life was also centered on agriculture and that, even though they may have behaved differently from their neighbors, they worked at least as hard as they. When the end of the week came, both Icarians and Americans enjoyed dances and festivals, thus contributing further to the good relations between the two groups. The result, as has already been mentioned, was a progressive acculturation of the Icarians into the mainstream of American culture (the Stars and Stripes floating over the New Icarian Community grounds is a striking illustration of this fact.) If the Icarians did not really manage to maintain their Utopian ideals, they did not fare better when it came to maintaining their French heritage. They progressively lost their uniqueness, they acquired more and more English words and, soon, could exchange conversations with their neighbors. The Icarian children sometimes married American youngsters, but it cannot be said that the Icarians acculturated the Americans into the community. It seems that the contrary was more common (this is much different from what has been known to happen in Louisiana where the Cajun spouse almost always brought the other spouse within the Cajun group and led to his or her acculturation within the Cajun community).[67] Finally, when one considers the Icarian buildings, it is not easy to delineate clearly the respective roles and influences which led to their styling and design. It has been mentioned that the three above-mentioned elements were found in varying degrees of importance, but not one of them was overpowering enough to be unmistakably noticeable.

If one is to judge the history of the Icarians in Iowa it thus becomes evident that, like the other French groups in the northern Mississippi River basin, their presence was hardly noticed by those who lived around them. The history of the Iowa Icarians could be said to reflect a quiet presence which ended in a barely audible whisper.[41]

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Prévos has published articles in several scholarly journals, both in France and in America, on topics ranging from Louisiana folklore and dialects to French folklore and American blues. He is a regular contributor to *Soul Bag*, the French blues magazine, to *Solo Blues*, the Spanish blues magazine, and contributing editor to *The Black Perspective in Music*.

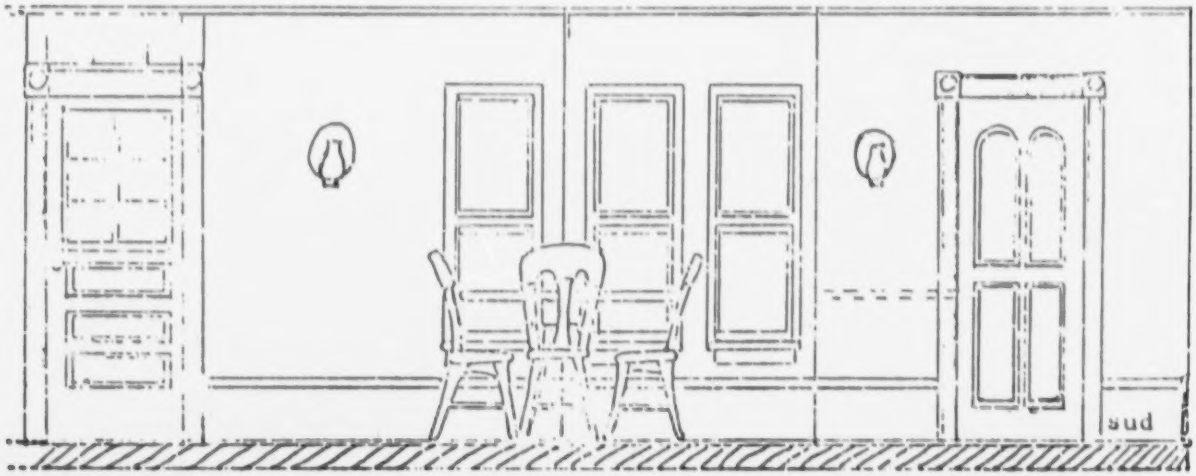


*Fig. 12. Interior of the dining room of the New Icarian Community communal building. [Conjectural drawing]*

## Notes

[1] For a brief history of the Utopian settlements in Iowa during the 19th century, see: Ava Johnson, "Communism in Early Iowa," *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, 30 (1949), 73-75; see also André Jean Marc Prévos, "Frenchmen Between Two Rivers: A History of the French in Iowa," Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Iowa (1981), I, 228-29 (this work will be identified as "Prévos-1")

[2] Etienne Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie* (Paris: Bureau du Populaire, 1840).

[3] Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son fondateur Etienne Cabet. Contribution à l'étude du socialisme expérimental* (Paris: Edouard Cornely, 1907), pp. 219-43.

[4] Prévos-1, I, 232; see also: H. Roger Grant, editor, *An Icarian Communist in Nauvoo. Comments by Emile Vallet* (Springfield, IL: The Illinois State Historical Society, 1971), *passim*.

[5] Prudhommeaux, pp. 346-419; see also: *Abstract Land Entries, 1851-1859, Adair and Adams Counties, Iowa*, ref. AV.III,20, Iowa State Historical Department of Museum and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa.

[6] For a history of the Icarian settlements in Iowa, see: André Jean Marc Prévos, "Histoire et ethnographie d'un groupe de communistes utopiques français dans l'état d' Iowa: le cas des Icariens du Comté d'Adams dans la seconde moitié du siècle, 1853-1898," Thèse de Doctorat de Troisième cycle, Université de Paris VIII (1986), pp. 1-247 (this work will be identified as "Prévos-2").

[7] The label "structure of everyday life" and its historical significance in relation to the Annals school of historiography are vividly illustrated in the monumental opus by Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life. Civilizations & Capitalism 15th-18th Century. Volume I.* Translation from the French revised by Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1981), *passim*.

[8] 1856 Census return. Census Division, Division of Historical Museum and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa, Book 36. 1860 Census return, Same location as 1856, Book 69. 1870 Census return, Computer stored data, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. The list of the 1898 membership comes from the Jules Gentry papers, Ref. BJ, Ic 1, Vol. 3, of Icarian Archives in Division of Historical Museum and Archives, Des Moines.

[9] Sylvester A. Piotrowski, *Etienne Cabet and the Voyage en Icarie. A Study in the History of Social Thought* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1935), p. 2; Janice Clark Fotion, "Cabet and Icarian Communism," Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Iowa (1966), pp. 250-51, 293-338.

[10] Prudhommeaux, p. 145.

[11] Cabet, *Voyage* . . ., p. 396-97.

[12] Cabet, *Voyage* . . ., p. 405.

[13] Cabet, *Voyage* . . ., p. 567.

[14] Cabet, *Voyage* . . ., p. 171.

[15] Cabet, *Voyage* . . ., p. 180.

[16] Cabet, *Voyage* . . ., p. 101.

[17] Robert H. Lauer and Jeanette C. Lauer, *The Spirit and the Flesh. Sex in Utopian Communities* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1983), pp. 35, 36, 42, 69, 72, 123, 167, 169.

[18] Cabet, *Voyage* . . ., p. 79, 82.

[19] Etienne Cabet, *Rèforme Icarienne, le 21 novembre 1853* (Nauvoo, IL: Imprimerie Icarienne, 1853), p. 20; Etienne Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne, situation dans l'Iowa au 15 octobre 1853* (Paris: Chez l'auteur, décembre 1853), p. 2.

[20] Prevos-1, I, 240.

[21] 1860 Census Return. Book 69, pp. 447-48.

[22] Prudhommeaux, pp. 477-85.

[23] *Revue Icarienne*, Ve Année, No. 4 (Mars-Avril, 1885). A translation of the article from the *Revue* may be found in Boris Blick and H. Roger Grant. "Life in New Icaria, Iowa: A Nineteenth Century Utopian Community," *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, 42 (Winter 1974), pp. 201-4.

[24] Larry Fruhling, "Extinct Town Reveals Secrets. Students Find Artifacts from Early Iowa Community," *Des Moines Tribune* (May 29, 1978).

[25] "Communism as Explained by a Former Icarian, Geo. Montaldo Writes Early Day History," *Adams County Free Press* (November 8, 1934).

[26] Marie Marchand Ross, *Child of Icaria* (New York City: City Printing, Co., 1938), p. 58.

[27] Albert Shaw, *Icaria. A Chapter in the History of Communism* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons – The Knickerbocker Press, 1884), p. 132.

[28] The issues of the *Revue Icarienne* dated 1885-1888 provide many illustrations of this evolution; also see: Prévos-2, pp. 248-307 for a more detailed treatment of Icarian everyday life in Iowa; a brief treatment of the same may be found in Prévos-1, I, 266-69.

[29] Such is the case for the Harmonist settlements in Pennsylvania and Indiana; see for example: Karl J.R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), *passim*; John A. Bole, *The Harmony Society* (Philadelphia: Americana Germanica Press, 1904), *passim*; John Larner, "Nails and Sundrie Medecine: Town Planning and Public Health in the Harmony Society, 1805-1840." *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 45 (1962), pp. 115-38, 209-27; Richard Pillsbury, "The Urban Street Pattern as a Cultural Indicator: Pennsylvania, 1682-1815," *Association of American Geographers*, 60 (1970), pp. 428-46; Paul H. Douglas, "Town Planning for the City of God," in Gairdner J. Moment and Otto F. Kraushaar, eds., *Utopias: The American Experience* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1980), pp. 103-25.

[30] Among the sources available are: 1) the successive issues of the *Revue Icarienne* published by the community to let Frenchmen and other friends of Icaria know about their life and evolution; 2) the Icarian archives in the Department of Museum and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa; 3) Marie Marchand's autobiographical *Child of Icaria* (cf. note 26 above); 4) the descriptions left by several visitors, among them: Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Socieites of the United States* (1875, rpt. New York: Schocken Books, 1965), *passim*; John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott, 1870), *passim*; Jules Prudhommeaux (cf. note 3, above); Albert Shaw, (cf. note 27, above); S.W. Huff, "Icaria," *Annals of Iowa*, 6 (1868), pp. 848-53. For a more detailed list of sources and for a lengthier treatment of the housing and village design of the Icarians, see Prévos-2, pp. 308-418.

[31] Cabet, *Voyage . . .*, p. 12.

[32] Cabet, *Voyage . . .*, p. 12-3.

[33] Ross, *Child of Icaria* (cf. note 26 above).

[34] Prévos-2, pp. 358-62.

[35] Prévos-2, pp. 362-66.

[36] Prévos-2, pp. 370-74.

[37] Prévos-1, I, 254-64. Prudhommeaux, pp. 502-56.

[38] Prévos-2, pp. 400-4. See, for example: Dean Louder, "Vieux Carré and Vieux Quebec: Urban Vestiges of French America?" Project Louisiane/Document de Travail/Working Paper, No. 2, Dept. of Geography, Université Laval, Quebec; see also: J. Frazier Smith, *White Pillars. Early Life and Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley Country* (New York: Bramhall House, 1969), *passim*.

[39] See, for example: Helena Hayward, editor, *World Furniture* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), *passim*; Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism: European Literature and the Age of Biedermeier* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), *passim*.

[40] See, for example: William Faulkner Rushton, *The Cajuns. From Acadia to Louisiana* (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1979), p. 10.

[41] Figures 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 are from Prévos-2, pp. 138, 132, 111, 359, 270, 271, 382, 396, 402, 399, 404.

# France and America: A Minnesota Artist's Experience

by Rena N. Coen

"Sport of exiling winds of change and
chance –
Feet in America and heart in France."[2]

When Alexis Jean Fournier (1865-1948) left Minneapolis for Paris in 1893 to study painting there, he was following an already well-established tradition among American artists. Indeed, the emotional and professional dilemma of the French-trained artist returning to his native America was a common enough experience in Fournier's time to have become the subject of a popular novel published in 1893 by William Dean Howells. In *The Coast of Bohemia*, the artist-hero articulates the predicament of those nineteenth century American artists who returned from their studies or visits to France determined to adapt the art of one culture to the reality of another. If such an artist had the courage of his convictions, the author observes, "a purely American event could be reported on his canvas with all its native character, and yet it could be made to appeal to the enlightened eye with the charm of a French subject." His hero, he went on, "owed a duty to France no less than to America and wished to fulfill it in a picture which should at once testify to the excellence of the French method and the American material."[1]

Fournier's connection with France, and his emotional identification with it, was even deeper than for most of his American counterparts. Though born on the edge of the frontier, in St. Paul, Minnesota, on July 4, 1865, his parents were recent immigrants from Longueuil, near Montreal, Canada. French was the language spoken at home during his childhood; and his genuine love of his native land, and particularly Minnesota, was colored throughout his life by a consciousness of his French ancestry and his fluency in the French language. Indeed, he was known, on occasion, to cultivate a "French" appearance and to adopt a French accent, passing himself off as a French artist to impress some of his American clients. Affectation aside, however, he felt himself, throughout his life

Fournier's formal art education prior to his departure for France at the age of 28 had been sporadic at best, and he eagerly looked forward to studying in Paris. He enrolled at the Académie Julian where, as in most established ateliers of the period, the method of instruction was fairly informal. Students would be assigned a particular subject, usually starting off with drawing from plaster casts of classical sculpture. When completed, the work would be criticized by the studio heads and even, from time to time, by guest artists from the prestigious École des Beaux Arts. Fournier's teachers at the Académie Julian were Jean-Paul Laurens and Benjamin Constant, two nineteenth century painters with a polished, academic style. His description of the Académie Julian is interesting both for his evaluation of his fellow students, especially the French ones, and for his perception of their attitude to the foreign students in their midst. "Julian's School," he reported, "is located in a big barnlike structure and contains three studios all of them having painting classes and one also the sculpture department. In the middle of the winter season, when it is in full blast, there are about three hundred students there collected from every quarter of the world. Americans are well received by the French students, not so the German and English. The apparent carelessness and levity of the French students is a source of constant wonder to the Americans who see them accomplish so much with their air of never doing anything. They come to school in the morning laughing and singing and smoking cigarettes and then proceed to throw stools and paint brushes and raise the very devil. The point is that when they work, they do work. The average French student will do more in an hour than a foreigner will do in a day . . . the Frenchman is sui generis. He cannot be compared to other nations. This merry student who seems to have no time but for wine, women and song will astonish you by turning out a masterpiece just when you have begun to think that he is altogether worthless.

"In the atelier, clothes cut no figure whatever. Most of the French wear long hair and a peculiar sort of student costume while some of the Americans even wear cowboy costumes.

"Everybody is trying to get a picture into the Salon. . . . The French call it 'arrived.' . . . there are generally only about 700 pictures chosen out of 9,000 offered. Nationality has nothing whatever to do with the awards."[3]

Much of Fournier's delight, he himself "arrived" later the same year. His painting, *Spring Morning Near Minnehaha Creek,* unlocated today, was selected to be hung at the Paris Salon of 1894. Based on a number of earlier studies that had been done on location, it depicted Minneapolis' most picturesque landmark. Its lightness and clarity aroused the excited admiration of Fournier's fellow students; and even the patriarchal Benjamin Constant, visiting the Salon exhibition on "varnishing day," insisted on being shown the painting by the artist himself. "Yes, it is a spring morning and no mistake," he said. "You understand nature, I see that. Bon Courage."[4]

It was an understanding of nature that was uniquely Fournier's own. Umoved, at this time, by the dazzling, light-filled canvases of the French Impressionists, Fournier developed his own way of conveying air and light in nature. His was a gentle, but nonetheless rigorous, exposition of form and color in landscape painting that resisted the dissolution of objects in the haze of atmosphere. Indeed, this manipulation of light retains something of the "luminist" tradition of earlier nineteenth-century American landscape painting where light is used to define form and not to dissolve it. Fournier, at this time, was still suspicious of the sensuous quality of the paint itself as handled by the French Impressionists, though later he would come to understand and appreciate its uses. Nor was he now concerned, as the Impressionists were, with the spontaneous recognition of a transient and fleeting moment. Fournier's vision was of a more permanent time and place, in the distilled image of an early spring morning, for example, whenever and wherever it would occur. In this respect he was closer to the French Barbizon painters of a generation or so earlier than he was to the Impressionists who were his closer contemporaries. Like the so-called "men of 1830," those artists who, in the mid-nineteenth century congregated in the village of Barbizon near the picturesque forest of Fontainebleau, Fournier sought to escape from the increasing sordidness of nineteenth century industrialization into unspoiled nature and the rural past. His contact at the Académie Julian with Henri Harpignies, his chosen mentor there and the last of the great Barbizon painters, strengthened Fournier's conviction that their art was the model he would choose for his own. Indeed, it may have been during the summer of 1894, which he spent traveling through the French provinces (and in Italy), that Fournier first conceived the idea of what was to be his life's major project, a series of paintings depicting the homes and haunts of the French Barbizon masters.

Fournier's first sojourn in France ended in late 1895 when he returned to Minneapolis with some 60 oils and 20 watercolors. One of the oils had the honor of bearing a Salon exhibition label; for in 1895, and later in 1896, Fournier repeated his success of 1894 by having paintings, both now lost, accepted for the Paris Salon. These triumphs gave the artist the sort of international reputation that made local galleries eager to display his work. Among them were Stevens and Robertson's Gallery on Sixth Street in Minneapolis, Clow's Gallery, and Harington Beard's Art House on Nicollet Avenue, where his paintings drew lavish praise. A review of the paintings at Beard's in the *Minneapolis Journal* of January 14, 1896, commended his "native genius" and spoke admiringly of the artist's "energy born of the determination to succeed."

Though no lists exist of the paintings that Fournier brought back from France, they may well have included *Evening in Normandy* (Fig. 1). The painting reveals a subtle luminosity and a subdued color palette in which soft tones of green, blue and grey predominate. Nature, as well as its humble creatures, both animal and human, aroused in the artist the same sentiments of reverence and quiet admiration as they did for such French Barbizon painters of the rural scene as Jean François Millet or, closer still, Charles Jacque. Indeed, Fournier, throughout his life followed the admonition pencilled in his sketchbook of 1901 by the French academician Carolus Durand,

> "Aimez la gloire plus que l'argent,
> L' art plus que la gloire,
> Le nature plus que l' art."

But Fournier was restless in Minneapolis. Scraping together what money he could, he departed in the fall of 1896 for another trip to France. Though he again enrolled at the Académie Julian, this visit to France was a brief one, for by the spring of 1897 he was back home in Minnesota. Shortly after his return he again painted the Minneapolis landmark that had earned him so much praise at his first Paris Salon. *Indian Summer Morning Near Minnehaha Creek* (Fig. 2), pictures the small stream at a distance beyond a sunny field. Its clear, bright light and delicate harmony of color was reminiscent of the earlier Salon pieces.

An entirely different light characterizes another painting of 1897, which clearly reveals the Barbizon influence while displaying Fournier's own dramatic sense of color. Undoubtedly one of his masterpieces, *When Golden Evening Fades* (Fig. 3), also called *Eventide: Normandie*, is typically Barbizon in its idyllic mood and poetic atmosphere as well as in the soft outlines of the objects fading in the evening gloom. A shepherd, with his dog, barely visible in the darkening shadows, guides his flock up a slight rise to the farm whose roof appears just over the crest of the hill. Like the peasants of the Barbizon masters, especially Jean François Millet, the solitary shepherd is a part of the nourishing earth, sustained by the same spirit that gives life to the animals he protects. In the vast skies the setting sun gleams between the lowering clouds in transient bursts of fiery glory, while the stream that winds through the meadow below reflects in more subdued tones the splendor of the evening sky. Though it is, of course, an intensely personal vision, its unity of the spiritual and material is held in common with such American followers of the Barbizon tradition as William Morris Hunt, Wyatt Eaton, and especially George Inness, whom Fournier much admired.[5] Moreover, in its expression of the ideal of nature and of the artist's subjective appreciation of it, it signalled a change of course in Fournier's artistic direction.

"Feet in America and heart in France" was still an apt description of Fournier's restlessness and his longing to be in what he considered his second native land. In April 1898, he again set out for France, determined this time to strike out on his own and to travel and study independently of the Académie Julian. In 1898, and in the following three years, Fournier's paintings were again exhibited at the Paris Salon. Though he apparently had intended that his family should join him in France later in the year,[6] he changed his mind and returned to Minneapolis in the fall of 1898 with twenty new canvases. He hoped to sell these pictures to his Minnesota friends and patrons in order to finance a more extended stay of several years in France. The money successfully raised, he again sailed for France in May 1899, on his fourth trip in less than six years, this time taking his wife and children with him. Upon their arrival the family settled a few miles north of Paris at Auvers-sur-Oise in the former home of Charles François Daubigny, one of the French Barbizon masters.

Shortly after his arrival in France, the artist painted the much-exhibited *A Sylvan Melody* (Fig. 4). It was Fournier's Salon piece of 1901 and was purchased the following year by Mrs. Frank H. Peavey, widow of the Minneapolis grain merchant. The Peaveys had seen the painting on the artist's easel during a visit to France in 1899. They were old and loyal patrons of Fournier and were always welcome in his home. Frank H. Peavey, whose portrait was the only one Fournier ever painted, died in 1901; and, in accordance with his wishes, Mrs. Peavey later donated the picture to the Minneapolis Public Library, which owned it until quite recently.

*A Sylvan Melody* is more sentimentalized than Millet's subjects, and accordingly the shepherd boy is less heroic. As he sits on a grassy knoll piping dreamily on his flute, the boy recalls instead the peasant figures of Constant Troyon, an older member than Millet of the Barbizon tradition. The atmospheric effects are also closer to Troyon, manipulating dark shadows for their pictorial effect. Each sheep in the flock is a study of passivity and contentment surrounding the shepherd boy as he plays on the flute. The late afternoon sun has begun its slow descent, illuminating the distant village in a bright shaft of light and bathing the tops of the foreground trees in its golden glow. The scene is one of tranquility and peace, of man and animal in harmony with nature. It is, perhaps, a more formal picture than many of Fournier's other paintings – lacking, to a certain degree, their spontaneity. Indeed, it has the aura of a studio piece deliberately painted for an academic jury. But it captures and even celebrates the nineteenth century ideal of the uncorrupted virtue of rural life, and this may have facilitated its acceptance by the Paris Salon.

Very different from his other pictures to date is a small picture entitled *Snow on the Village* (Fig. 5), painted in Auvers in January or February 1900. A low stone wall climbs into the picture creating an interesting curve in the composition of rectangles and inverted "V's," while a snow-rimmed red roof provides a colorful note in the otherwise monochromatic description of winter in the village. Fournier exploits to the full here the pictorial possibilities of the huddled roofs of the village homes. It is a quiet, unforced landscape in which a certain calm restraint, together with a cool delicacy in handling the architectural masses, marks it as one of Fournier's most interesting works. Resisting the painterly seduction of impressionism to which Willard LeRoy Metcalf, John Twachtman and so many of his American contemporaries succumbed, Fournier retains in *Snow on the Village*, the linear precision and solid form of an older American tradition.

At this time he was, however, increasingly devoting himself to the same intense study of light and atmosphere in nature as the French Impressionists. In the painting *In Normandie*, for example (Fig. 6), probably painted around 1900, the day is an intermittently overcast one in which the clouds cast a transient light on a French country scene dominated by the cone-topped round haystacks of rural Normandy, made famous by Monet's paintings of them in the 1890s. The sunny landscape is infused with life in a vibrant suggestion of nature's evanescent moods. That mood, in lower key and more closely Barbizon, is in *Peaceful Night; Normandie* (Fig. 7), a moonlit scene and one of the many nocturnal landscapes in the artist's oeuvre. Originally in the collection of Dr. Soren Rees, one of Fournier's Minneapolis patrons, the painting celebrates nature in a hushed and tranquil moment. Like the canvases of the Barbizon masters, it retains a clear sense of time and place in a poetic distillation of the artist's vision.

Indeed, throughout the early years in France, the artist was nurturing a private dream of celebrating the Barbizon masters, to whom he felt he owed so much, in a series of canvases devoted to their homes and haunts. Though a number of years were to pass before he would be able to realize that dream, in the spring of 1907 he finally set out again for France, this time backed by his chief American patron, Elbert Hubbard, founder and guiding light of the Roycroft Arts and Crafts Community in East Aurora, New York, with which Fournier had become closely associated. He settled again in Auvers but made frequent trips to Barbizon to study the environs of the village made famous by the so-called "Men of 1830."

The village of Barbizon was a cluster of about two hundred cottages on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau, situated on the west bank of the Seine about thirty-five miles south of Paris. This was the place where, about the middle of the nineteenth century, a group of French artists went to seek a new freedom from the restraints of academic convention in a direct communion with the changing rhythms of nature. But their direct translation of nature, observed and recorded "en plein air " was not the only thing that set them apart from their contemporaries. These artists sought in nature a new way of life, a daily source of inspiration as both men and artists, much as the peasants who tilled the fields, identified themselves with the land that sustained them. Closeness to nature, these artists felt, expressed through a simple rural life, was the true measure of an artist's success, rather than prizes won in a necessarily corrupt urban environment.

The Forest of Fontainebleau, which these artists chose as the center of their artistic life, was a rather tame wilderness of shallow pools, narrow streams, and clusters of oak, birch and elm. Here the woods were rarely so dense that sunlight could not easily penetrate to the forest floor, and the forest itself was traversed by many well-trodden paths.[8] Nevertheless, suitable subjects for the painter abounded, not only in the forest itself but in the carefully tended fields that surrounded it. Nature here offered not "sublimity" but domesticity, peace and tranquility.

Because the Barbizon landscapes stressed a "natural" environment rather than the classical compositions of the accepted academic tradition based on Claude Lorraine and Nicolas Poussin, they had a significant impact on a whole generation of American artists and collectors. Barbizon seemed to represent for the American audience an idyllic environment similar to the natural utopia that had once existed in the New World but now was being threatened by the spread of industry and urbanization. Still, Barbizon was different from the depiction of nature as a national and religious symbol that had characterized the landscapes of Thomas Cole and his followers of the Hudson River School. It was more gently didactic, and its pervasive sentiment was not drama but nostalgia. Its appeal was more to the imagination than to any patriotic impulse, and Barbizon even implied a faint decadence born of the centuries-old continuity of peasant life. Indeed, that very decadence of Old World peasantry provoked the same delicate melancholy that accompanied the portrayal of the New World Indians, those "noble savages" whose fate was doomed by the westward expansion of white civilization. Both groups, American Indians and French peasants, satisfied a romantic yearning for the primitivism associated with Rousseauian innocence and virtue, and for the "natural man" as opposed to the "civilized man," necessarily corrupted by centuries of false values, political and social intrigue and, more recently, industrialization.

The idea of painting a group of pictures devoted to the homes of the Barbizon masters was probably focused in Fournier's mind in 1902 when Charles Sprague Smith published a small volume reminiscing about a summer he had spent a decade earlier at the village of Bourron, just a few miles from Barbizon. The book, entitled *Barbizon Days: Millet-Corot-Rousseau-Barye*, was a chronicle of the author's visit, together with written sketches of the artists named in the title. Fournier was an avid collector of any scrap of information he could find about the Barbizon school, and the book may well have come to his attention. The Barbizon Homes project was further stimulated a few years later by the example of Elbert Hubbard's *Little Journeys*, a series of small books published and beautifully printed and decorated by the Roycroft Press. The series recounted the author's fictional visits to the homes of the great men of the past, a few famous artists among them.

The idea of a pictorial equivalent of the *Little Journeys* would be particularly appealing to an artist who was as fond of painting pictures of houses of historic or personal interest as Fournier was. Such a predilection is evident from Fournier's many examples in this genre, going back as far as 1888 and his painting of *The Old Home of Gen. Sibley,* Minnesota's first governor. But it was more than just the homes that Fournier had in mind for the Barbizon series. He also planned a set of landscapes devoted to the countryside familiar to his heroes, the countryside they themselves captured on their canvases. *In Daubigny's Country, In Corot's Country, In Cazin's Country, In Millet's Country,* and *Daubigny's Neighbors* were painted as part of a companion series constituting the "haunts" of the Barbizon masters. Apparently the "haunts" set was never completed, however, and Fournier incorporated the ones he did paint into the series of "homes."

In later reminiscing about the year that he spent sketching his impressions of the Barbizon masters' homes and the countryside celebrated by them, Fournier recalled "making dozens of visits to a certain spot to watch the effects of light and shade under different conditions. Dawn found me in the streets or on the hills and even by moonlight I sketched my impressions." He added that it was all "tremendous work and endless amount of trouble." But he was tenacious in pursuing his goal, for "I had in my mind a fixed purpose, to make this series the great work of my life. I was consumed with the ambition to paint better than I had ever painted before. . . . Though the peasants stared at me suspiciously and wondered of what interest their crazy huts could be to a foreigner, I worked on, sure of myself and filled with my subject."

Fournier settled again in Auvers, in the old house formerly occupied by Charles François Daubigny, but he was frequently in Barbizon as well. Here he was the welcome guest of Carl Millet, the son of the famous Jean François Millet. The two men became good friends, spending many leisure hours together, the Frenchman reminiscing about his father and the American devotee hanging on his every word.

Nevertheless, although Fournier steeped himself in the world of the Barbizon masters and absorbed the lessons of their school, his series of Barbizon Homes is far from an imitation of any one of them. Distinguished by Fournier's special sense of color, the series of 20 paintings is his individual tribute to them, expressed in terms of the flowing light and subtle atmospheric effects that were peculiarly his own. Ever sensitive to the nuances of nature's moods, he tried moreover to choose the time of day or atmospheric condition appropriate to the personality and style of each of the Barbizon masters. "I studied each home at various hours of the day before I lifted a brush," he later said. "I wanted to catch the mood of the departed owner when it seemed most vibrant. When my pictures were finished, I found to my surprise, that each one had been painted at a different hour, and that I had represented the sky and every change of light and shadow from faint gleam of dawn to the cool silver of moonlight." In this way, *Millet's Birthplace,* for example, reflects the austere and melancholy character of that painter, and *Daubigny's First Studio,* also called *The Charcoal Burner's Hut* (Fig. 8) evokes the sense of peace, of man in harmony with nature, that is so characteristic of Daubigny's work. Indeed, though typical of the series it is painted in a style that is closer to the Barbizon masters than most of Fournier's other paintings. In this picture we see a small, thatch-roofed stone cottage at Auvers-sur-Oise set in a forest glade against a rich background of various shades and permutations of green. The grain shocks surrounding the house and the neighboring woods in their rich summer foliage are resonant with the freshness and fertility of the countryside. The thin curl of blue smoke that spirals upward from the cottage chimney shimmers in a thin, diaphanous veil against the dark green of the forest trees. It is a sign of human presence in the woods and a suggestion of the immutable bond between man and nature. It is also a characteristic motif in Fournier's work, appearing frequently enough in his landscapes to constitute an artistic signature.

In addition to his home in Auvers, Daubigny also had a houseboat moored on the Oise nearby. Thirty-five feet long, equipped with a cabin accommodating four and a tent on the deck to provide shelter for even more, it was large enough to float down the river – bearing Daubigny and his artist friends on their inland journeys through the waterways of Normandy. Daubigny was so fond of his boat that his friends affectionately called him "Captain," and during the Franco-Prussian War, fearing it would fall into the hands of the Prussians, he scuttled it to the bottom of the river, raising it again after the war was over. The boat was the scene of elaborate picnic dinners where conviviality and good fellowship reigned. But at other times hard work was the order of the day (and night, for these painters were as interested in the effects of moonlight on the landscape as they were in nature's daytime moods). A number of Fournier paintings were, in fact, a result of these river journeys on Daubigny's boat.

Narcisse Virgile Diaz de la Peña (known generally as Diaz) was both the wildest and the wealthiest of the Barbizon painters. His home (Fig. 9) reflects the commanding prices that his canvases brought and that were the wonder of the others in the Barbizon coterie. Known for his colorful woodland scenes, executed with a quick, paint-laden brush, Diaz's home at Barbizon was an elegant, vine-covered stone house in the latest Gothic revival style – with picturesque gables, trellises, and a vast, well-cared-for lawn. Bits of ancient sculpture appeared here and there, and, as an added conceit, a peacock strutted around the grounds. Fournier's painting emphasizes the stylishness of Diaz's country mansion and the refreshing coolness of the surrounding green lawns and gravelled walkways in the dappled shade of the great trees above them.

Fournier returned to the United States after about a year in France, determined to keep his series of Barbizon Homes together as a group and hoping to sell the entire collection to a museum that would thus honor the Barbizon painters as he had done. The series was first exhibited at the Schaus Art Galleries on Fifth Avenue in New York City from March 16 to April 16, 1910. In connection with that exhibition William Schaus also published a book by Fournier, *The Homes of the Men of 1830*, reproducing some of the homes and containing the artist's comments on them – with an introduction by Fournier's old friend Herbert Waldron Faulkner.[12] The book is a chatty discussion of the Fournier project with a brief biography of each of the Barbizon masters and an even briefer description of the homes themselves. Calling Fournier "the disciple of masters of the Barbizon school," Faulkner writes that "it is as if he had walked and talked with each and all beneath the shade of Fontainebleau Forest. . . . Mr. Fournier has lovingly studied the lives of these, his masters, and has gone to the homes of each – there to live over again in his eager imagination what they lived and saw and did. In each place he has patiently sought out their haunts, living in Daubigny's studio, sailing down the Oise, . . . and associating with the peasants of Millet – and has looked at nature through their eyes, thus treading in their footsteps, breathing their artistic atmosphere, dwelling in the very pictures that they painted. In doing so he has acquired a rare insight into the works of the Barbizon painters, and is peculiarly fitted to interpret their meaning."[13]

Though Fournier returned to France only once more, the impressions he had already recorded there, bolstered by many notes and drawings, furnished a wealth of material for future use. One of the most important of the later pictures, which may actually have been begun in France, is *The Gleaners* (Fig. 10), painted in 1908. Undoubtedly inspired by Millet's picture of the same theme, it is still very different. Where Millet stresses the monumental forms of the gleaners bending to their toil in a tight, almost abstract compositional arrangement, Fournier stresses the coloristic effects of light and atmosphere. In the glow of the setting sun, reflected in fiery streaks in the evening sky, three gleaners, dimly seen in the darkening foreground, gather around a small fire to ward off the chill of the evening air. One of these figures still bends to her task, and, of the three, is the closest to Millet's gleaners. But color, not mass, is Fournier's purpose; and his brush delicately suggests the gathering shadows about to envelope the gleaners, the field and the distant cottages.

Fournier returned to France for one final trip in the spring of 1913. For some time during that trip he and Charles Francis Browne of the Chicago Art Institute were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Daubigny, son and daughter-in-law of the Barbizon master, with whom Fournier had established a warm friendship on his earlier trips to France. The Daubigny home had recently been acquired by the French government as a historic house – the sale including four large Corots that hung in the living room – but the Daubigny family had been given the right to continue living there for the remainder of their lives.

It is not known exactly how long Fournier remained in France during the 1913 visit. He seems to have felt, however, that the pictorial possibilities of the Barbizon Homes and Haunts had been exhausted, and, travelling more widely, other subjects captured his attention and soon engaged his brush. For example, he painted a number of views of the Chateau

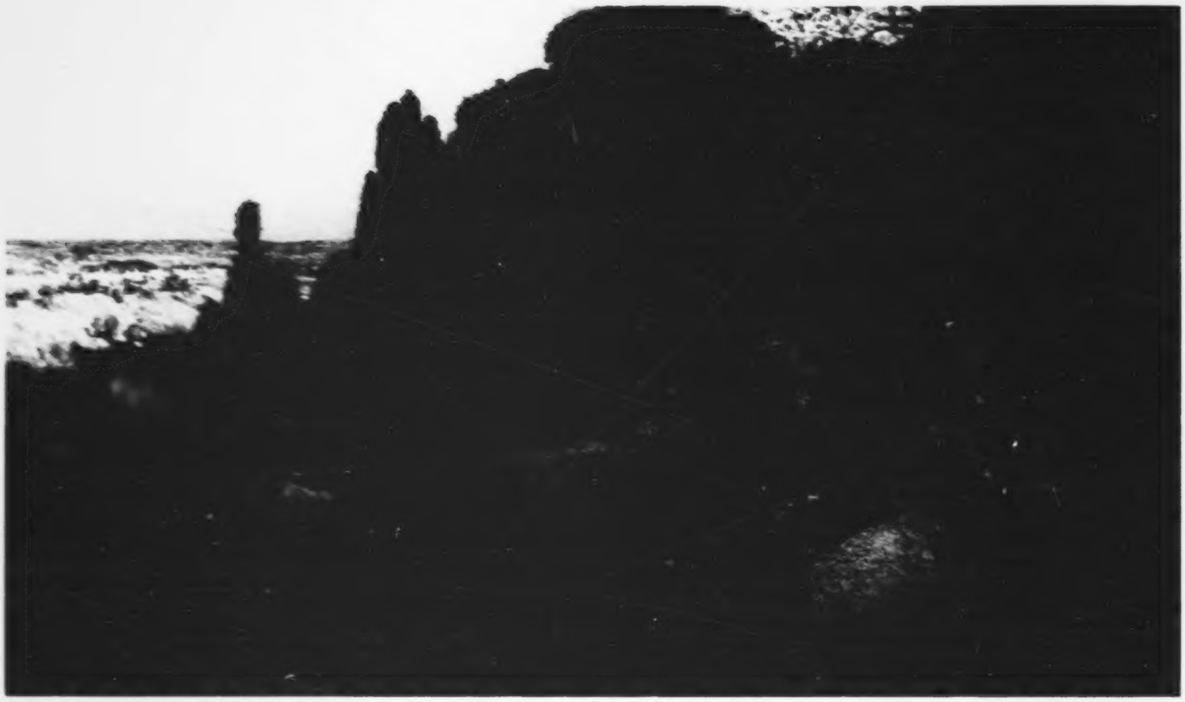


Fig. 4. *A Sylvan Melody*. Oil on canvas: 37¼" x 53½". Private Collection.

Gaillard at Les Andelys on the river Seine south of Rouen. The castle was built in 1196 by King Richard I, the "Lion-Hearted," of England. At the time of its construction it was one of the largest and strongest yet known in France, and its name, "the saucy castle," may have referred to its having been built to deter attacks by the King of France on Richard's Normandy domain.

Fournier painted the castle many times and under a variety of atmospheric conditions. In painting one subject in nature's changing moods he repeated, of course, the Impressionists' fondness for showing the effects of different light and climatic conditions on a single pastoral (or even urban) subject, like Monet's series of haystacks at Giverny, for example, or his many views of the Cathedral at Rouen. And, indeed, some of the small studies that Fournier painted of the Chateau Gaillard are quite impressionistic in their broad, loose brushwork and broken color technique. But a more finished piece, *Chateau Gaillard in the Mist* (cover), dated 1913 – in its restricted color palette in which one "tone" predominates – is closer to American "Tonalism" than either French Impressionism or the Barbizon school. Though its subject, of course, is thoroughly French, it is not truly Barbizon in mood and execution. Rather, it comes closer in spirit to the art of Puvis de Chavannes and to the simplified backgrounds of that artist's neoclassic allegories decorating, for example, the Boston Public Library. These were executed by the French artist between 1891 and 1896 and were undoubtedly well-known to Fournier from his frequent visits to the city. Still, *Chateau Gaillard in the Mist* clearly participates in the American Tonalist esthetic. Its simplified forms, seen through a veil of mist, and its subdued tones of greys, blues and violets suggest the quiet reverie and subjective contemplation of nature that are the hallmarks of Tonalist paintings. Fournier defines the source of the mistiness in the banks of clouds that hover over the ruins of the castle above the village of Les Andelys. But in spite of its airy curtain, the steep hill crowned by Richard the Lion-Hearted's castle, rises dominantly in the center of the picture, framed by the tree-lined river banks on either side. The muted tones, evoking a typically Tonalist nostalgia, are found in a number of earlier Fournier paintings, too, particularly in some of the Barbizon Homes and in the moonlit scenes of Normandy.

Fournier eventually also participated in the American adaptation of the French Impressionist tradition, particularly through his later association with a group of American Impressionists in Brown County, Indiana. However, his lifelong admiration for the Barbizon painters, expressed in his series of homes and haunts, was in his own eyes as well as the public's, his crowning achievement. When he died on January 16, 1948, several of the newspaper obituaries referred to him as "the last of the Barbizon painters." It was an epitaph that would have pleased him well.

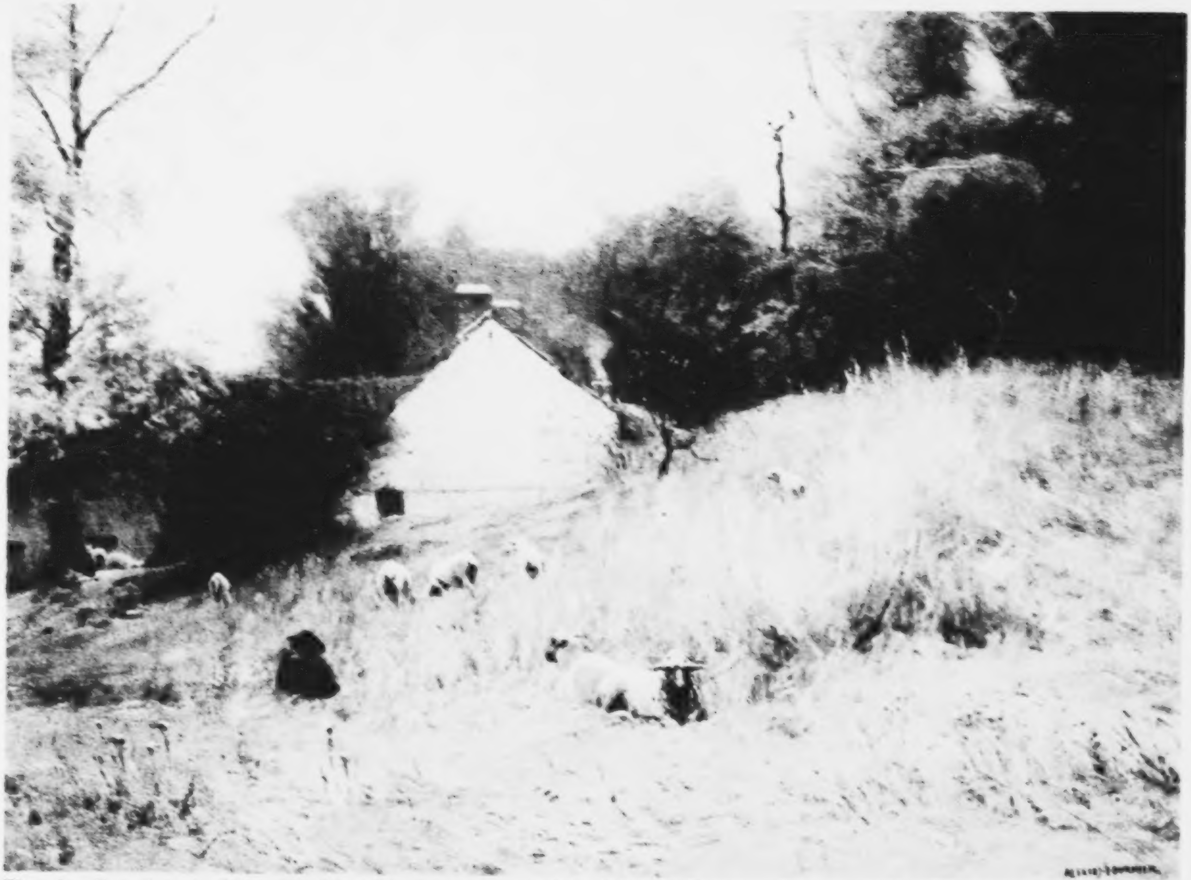


Fig. 1. *Evening in Normandy*. Oil on canvas: 30" x 40". Collection: Bruce and Elizabeth Malkerson.

Fig. 2. *Indian Summer Morning Near Minnehaha Creek*. Oil on canvas: 14½" x 23". Private Collection.

Fig. 3. *When Golden Evening Fades*
Oil on canvas: 27'' x 36'', color
Collection: Allan Bartlett, Minneapolis

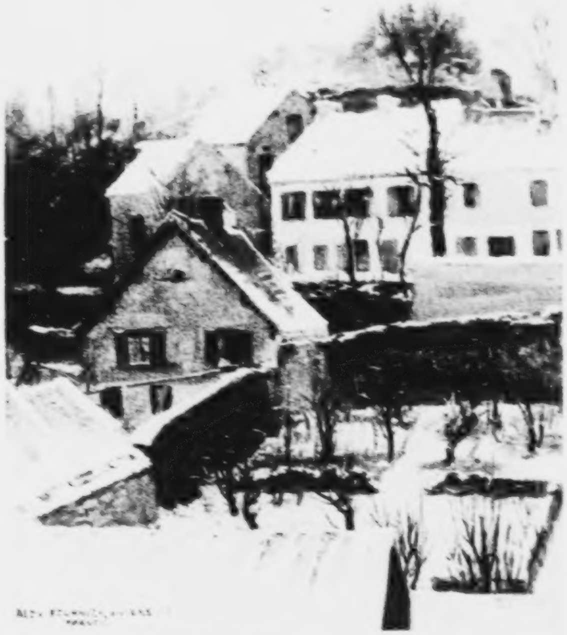


Fig. 5. *Snow on the Village*
Oil on canvas: 16'' x 20''
Private Collection

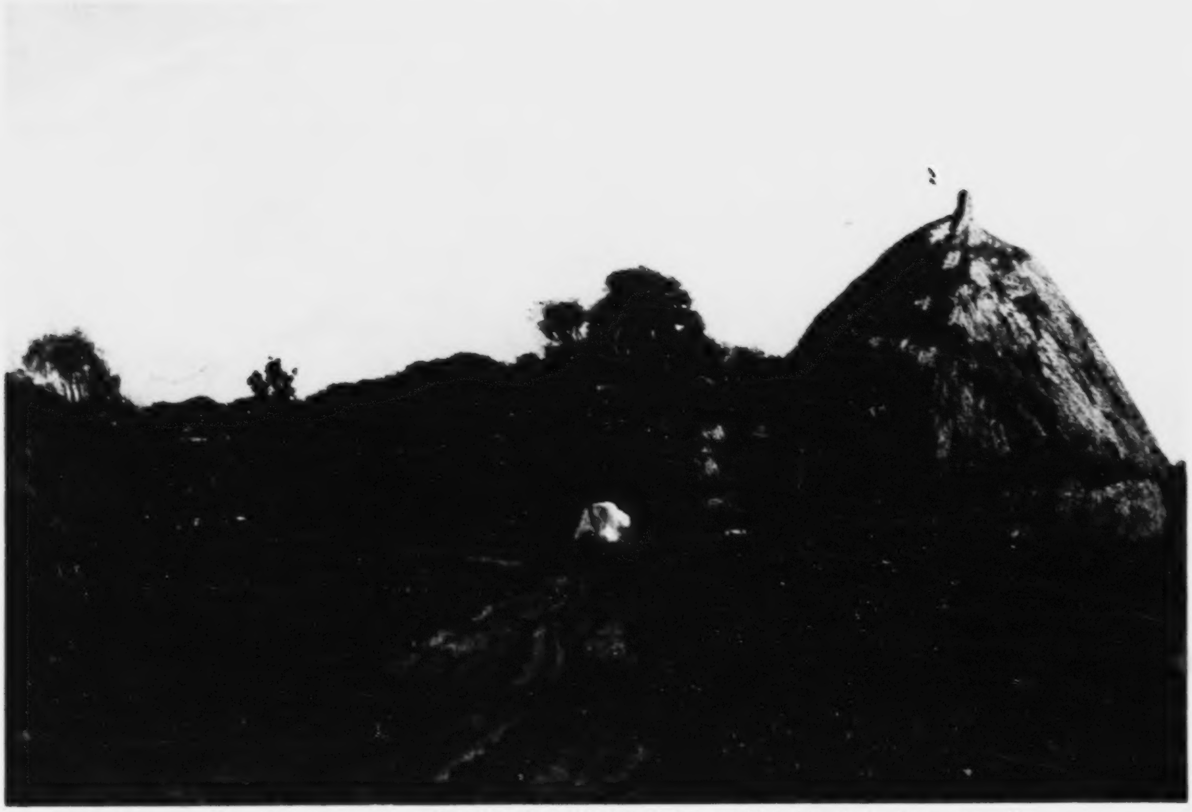


Fig. 6. *In Normandie*. Oil on canvas: 15½'' x 22½''. Collection: Allan Bartlett, Minneapolis.

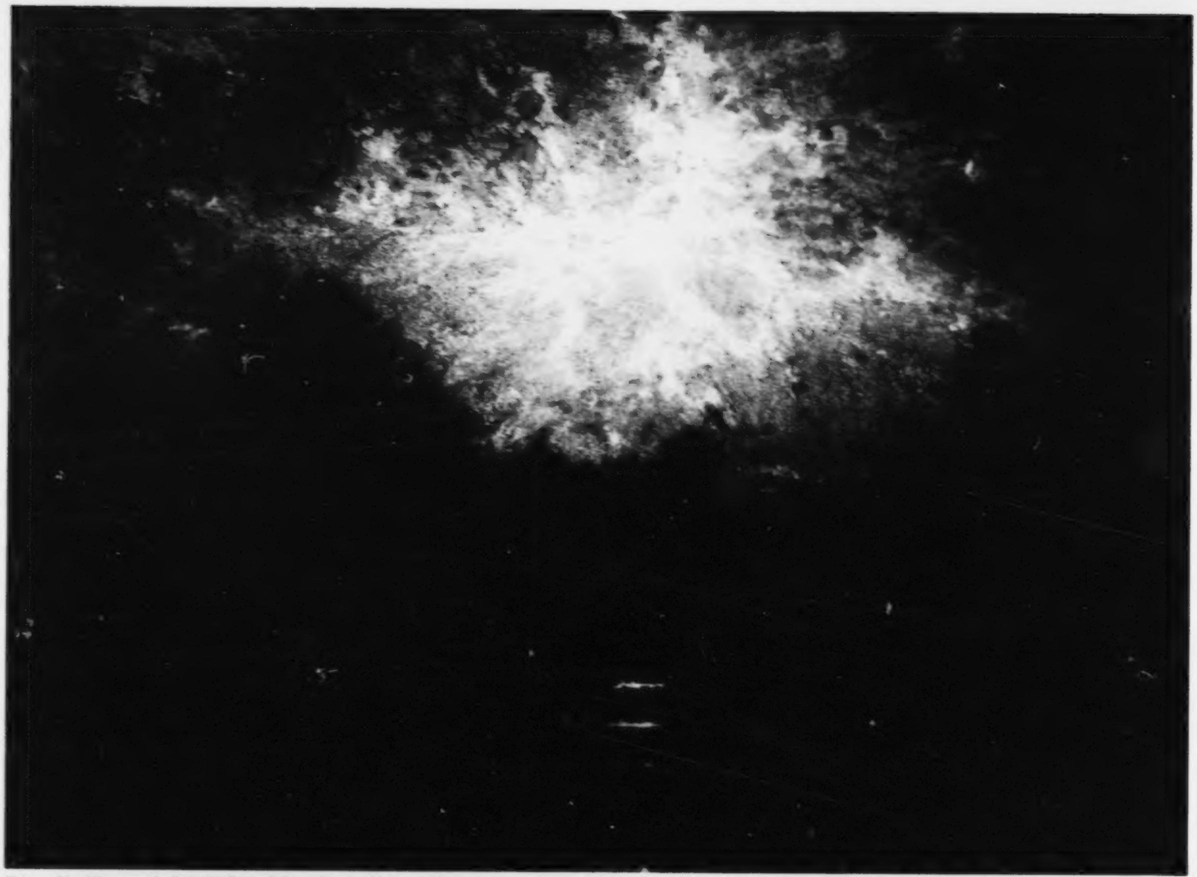


Fig. 7. *Peaceful Night; Normandie*. Oil on canvas: 20½'' x 28¼'', color. Private Collection.

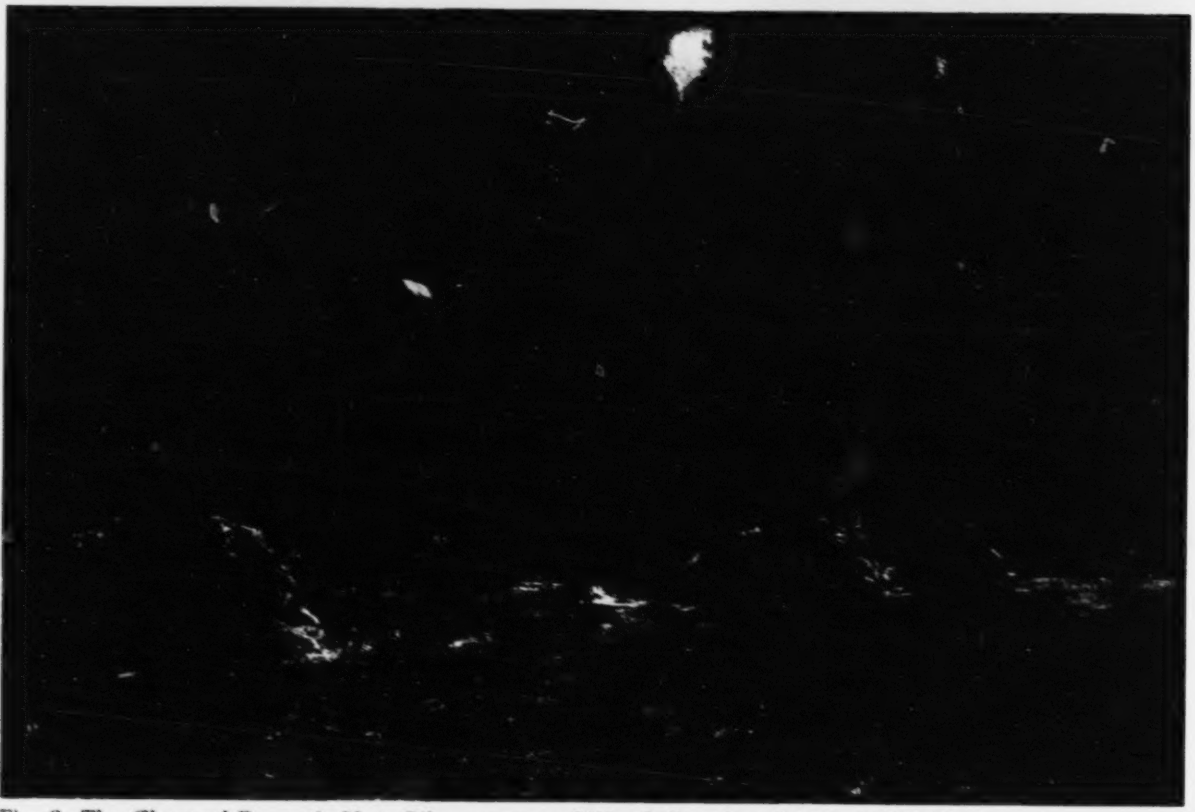


Fig. 8. *The Charcoal Burner's Hut*. Oil on canvas: 24'' x 36'', color. Private Collection.

Fig. 9. *Home of Diaz*. Oil on canvas: 28½'' x 39''. 1st Source Bank, South Bend, Indiana.

Fig. 10. *The Gleaners*. Oil on canvas: 48'' x 69'', color. Collection: Gerald and Sue Czulewicz.

Rena Newmann Coen was a research assistant and lecturer at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts from 1961 to 1966. In 1969 she became an assistant professor of art history (and adjunct professor of American studies) at St. Cloud State University; she has been a full professor since 1978.

Mrs. Coen earned a B.A. at Barnard College in 1946 and won the Travel Prize for Excellence in Art History the same year. She received an M.A. at Yale University in 1948 and held a Junior Sterling Fellowship from 1947 to 1949. She held a Danforth Foundation Graduate Fellowship for Women from 1966 to 1969 and was awarded a Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota in 1969, with a major in art history and a minor in American history; her dissertation was "The Indian as the Noble Savage in Nineteenth Century American Art." In 1976-1977 she held a Smithsonian Institution postdoctoral fellowship at the National Museum of American Art.

In 1976 the University of Minnesota Press published Mrs. Coen's *Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota, 1820-1914*. In 1985 the North Star Press of St. Cloud, Minn., published her *In the Mainstream: The Art of Alexis Jean Fournier, 1865-1948*. Mrs. Coen is the co-author of a forthcoming book, *Catalogue of American Paintings in the Collection of the University of Minnesota Art Museum*. A selected list of Mrs. Coen's articles and book reviews includes "A Possible James Earl Painting," *The Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts* (Sept., 1963); "The Embroidered Hanging of the Duc de Crequy," *The Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts* (March 1965); "Sgt. E.K. Thomas, Fort Snelling Artist," *Minnesota History* (Fall, 1969); "Portrait of Lawrence Taliaferro: Did Catlin Paint It?" *Minnesota History* (Winter, 1971); "Harmsen's Western Americana," (book review), *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (Spring, 1973); "The Last of the Buffalo, A Theme in the Iconography of the American West," *American Art Journal* (November, 1973); "The Image of the Indian and the Black Man in American Art," by Elwood C. Parry (book review), *Minnesota History* (Spring, 1975); "Edwin Whitefield: Nineteenth Century North American Scenery" by Bettina A. Norton (book review), *Minnesota History* (Winter, 1978); "Alfred Thomson Bricher's Minnesota Scenes," *Minnesota History (Summer, 1979)*; *"Cole, Coleridge and Kubla Khan," Art History* (University of East Anglia, England), June 1980; "Longfellow, Hiawatha and American 19th-Century Painters" *Papers Presented at the Longfellow Commemorative Conference*, Longfellow National Historic Site, Cambridge, Mass. (April 1982); "The Sabine Women in the Wild West," *Great Plains Quarterly* University of Nebraska, Lincoln (Spring, 1983); "The Family in American Art," Curriculum Development brochure for the National Museum of American Art under the sponsorship of Chesebrough-Pond's Inc. (February 1984).

Mrs. Coen is the author of six children's art books brought out by Lerner Publications of Minneapolis from 1965 to 1972: *Kings and Queens in Art, American History in Art, Medicine in Art, The Old Testament in Art, The Black Man in Art* and *The Red Man in Art*.

A selected list of her invited lectures includes: "The Indian as a Noble Savage in the Paintings of Seth Eastman," American Studies Association, Minneapolis, September 27-30, 1979; "The Architect's Dream by Thomas Cole," Southeast College Art Conference, Atlanta, October 25-27, 1979; "Nineteenth Century Touring Artists of the Upper Midwest," Midcontinent American Studies Association, Des Moines, Iowa, April 17-19, 1980; "Westward Ho! The Women in the Grand, Traditional Manner," University of Kansas, November 7, 1981; "Toward a State Art History," Symposium on American Regional Art, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Feb., 1982; and "The Last of the Buffalo," Symposium on Treasures of the Old West, Buffalo Bill Museum and Whitney Gallery of Western Art, Cody, WY, June 15, 1984.

She has been guest curator at two exhibitions: *Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota, 1820-1914,* Bicentennial Exhibition sponsored by the University of Minnesota Art Museum, February-March 1976, and *Alexis Jean Fournier, The Last American Barbizon*, sponsored by the Minnesota State Historical Society, September 11-December 14, 1985.

## Notes

[1] For a good discussion of the problem of the expatriot American artist returning home, see Laura R. Meixner, *An International Episode: Millet, Monet, & Their American Counterparts*, Dixon Gallery, Memphis, Tenn., 1983, from which the quotation is taken.

[2] These lines appear on the bookplates which Fournier's friend, the British writer Richard Le Gallienne was affixing to his books in 1910. The sentiment, intended to define Le Gallienne's own dilemma, applies as aptly to Fournier.

[3] Interview in *Minneapolis Journal*, Nov. 18, 1895.

[4] *Brush and Pencil Magazine*, 1899, p. 245.

[5] Fournier was a close friend in Paris of George Inness, Jr. See *Minneapolis Journal*, May 17, 1899, p. 8.

[6] *Minneapolis Journal*, March 29, 1898, p. 9.

[7] *Minneapolis Journal*, Nov. 21, 1899, p. 8.

[8] For an excellent discussion of American Barbizon painters see Peter Bermingham, *American Art in a Barbizon Mood*, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975.

[9] Charles Sprague Smith, *Barbizon Days: Millet - Corot - Rousseau - Barye*, New York, A. Wessels & Co., 1902.

[10] *Minneapolis Journal*, Oct. 8, 1911, p. 6.

[11] Unheaded, undated clipping, Fournier's scrapbook, collection of Allan Bartlett, Minneapolis.

[12] Alexis Jean Fournier, *The Homes of the Men of 1830*, New York, William Schaus Galleries, 1910. Introduction by Herbert Waldron Faulkner.

[13] *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

# The Mute Heritage: Perspective on the French of America

by Armand Renaud

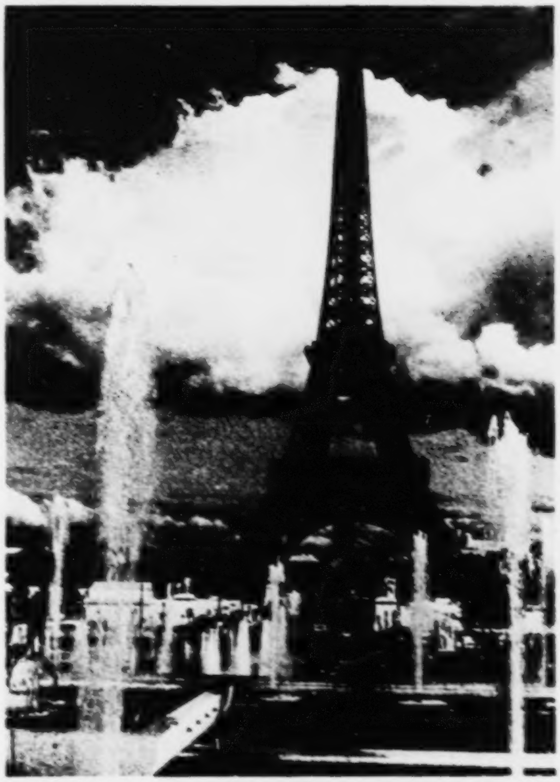
French in the title refers principally to the speech of those whose ancestors settled in North America when France was under the Ancien Régime. Their heritage is mute in the sense that pioneer efforts and later tribulations received little attention among their North American neighbors and still less in the motherland of their ancestors. Too often what has been "known" and repeated was distorted, perhaps no more from the failings of the surrounding observers than from those of the American-French themselves. For the latter, first perhaps because of inherited culture but also by design, as a means of resisting English pressure to become English (later "Canadian" or "American"), chose to withdraw from the English-speaking world in order to preserve what they deemed precious, their identity as a people, their religion, and, not least, their language.

Space would prohibit an attempt to restate here the "problem" of the North American-French, much less to put it into focus. A less ambitious aim is to bring perspective. The means will be an intersecting medley of information; when cast in a different light some of the facts may appear more clearly and perhaps begin to speak for themselves.[1]

Before discussing aspects of the language a number of events and circumstances should be mentioned; they have bearing on the nature of the French in North America.

Less than two decades before 1776, when it lost most of its North American territories to subjects in revolt against what they perceived as oppression, England won a battle against France in their worldwide struggle for colonial possessions.[2] As a result of this victory, Britain obtained New France, that is, "most of the present province of Quebec and also a vast ill-defined area stretching from the far west to the Alleghenies and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, as well as the French territories on the North Atlantic."[3] Nearly overnight the French in America fell under the jurisdiction of English law. A few administrators, officers and prelates were able to return to France; the vast majority willingly or unwillingly found themselves cut off from the motherland. Many, perhaps most, of the inhabitants had never thought of leaving "la Nouvelle France." Let us say it once more: they saw themselves as French, tied by blood, culture, religion and tongue to the distant kinsmen on the other side of the sea.[4]

The terms of the Treaty of Paris, 1763, have not been seen as harsh by many an American, Canadian and English critic or historian. The French were allowed to retain their houses, goods and effects and could continue to practice their religion. But, at the same time, Catholics were debarred from almost all offices Soon it became evident that the British intended to progressively Anglicize the French, a plan that, despite confirming accords signed in the course



*The Eiffel Tower was designed as a temporary structure for the Paris Exposition of 1889 by French engineer Alexander Eiffel (*La France en images*).*

*The English translation for this picture's caption is "the bridge of the Arts and the Institute"* (La France en images).

of the nineteenth century, would continue unabated under a variety of guises into this last third of the twentieth century.[5]

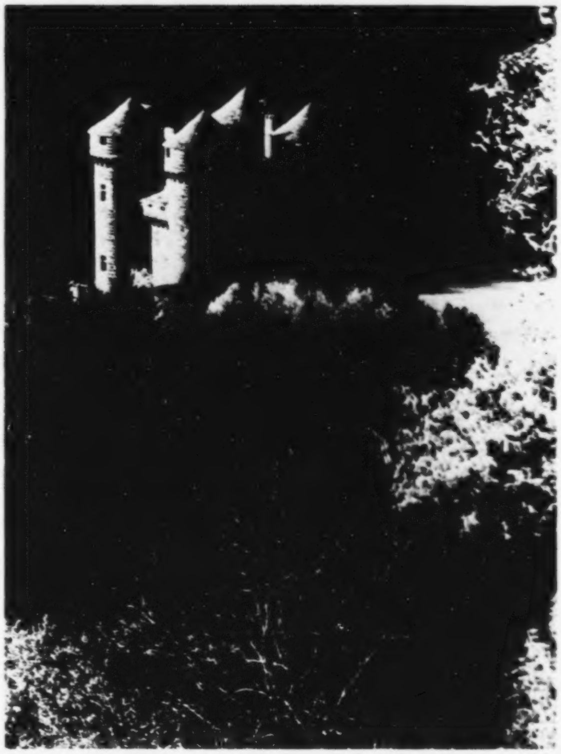
The radical severance of ties with the motherland in some respects made the inhabitants of "la Nouvelle France" savor for a time their "Frenchness" with more intensity than ever before, but the "douce France" they cherished in their hearts and recalled in countless songs was not to survive for long the Old Régime's first empire.[6] The French Revolution broke out in 1789 and France began to undergo profound changes. The political, social and religious structures of France were being changed radically, as were the mores and, above all, the language. The common people's pronunciation, which in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries frequently had been noted and condemned in the emerging bourgeoisie,[7] progressively replaced after 1789 the pronunciation of the aristocracy and of "les honnêtes gens," *i.e.*, those who easily saw themselves as the decent, the respectable, the polished, indeed the only people who really mattered.

The linguistic revolution, which will be discussed below, was to be perceived in time and would prove disconcerting, but in the first years of the French Republic what troubled the American-French above all else were the reports of wanton slaughter of priests and nuns, the gratuitous murder of aristocrats, the unconscionable expropriation and sale of church property, the barbarous execution of the king and the queen. The French in Europe were indiscriminately tearing down France in the name of principles to which the French in America had not been exposed. Certainly the American-French had come to appreciate freedom and soon enough would endorse rebellion against abuse and tyranny, but in the 1790s the Revolution was spontaneously rejected.[8] Between France and the vestiges of New France a chasm appeared which was to widen during the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries. Unwilling to be "brainwashed" or assimilated by the British- and English-speaking neighbors, unable to identify with the "new France" in Europe, the French of America withdrew into their vision of what was rightly French, including the language whose fame had spread so far and wide that it had been adopted as the prestigious idiom of many a court in Europe.

We noted earlier that the migrations of the French to America had taken place during a period of linguistic upheaval in France itself. The dominant language of France had been extraordinarily rich in the sixteenth century; witness the works of Rabelais, Ronsard, Montaigne. Even at court and in the salons it remained a verdurous language rooted in the speech of the populace until well into the seventeenth century.[9] Malherbe, seen as the pioneer spirit behind the classical ideal in France, referred all enquiries about the proper meaning or use of a word to the natural curators of the living language, the common people.[10] But in 1635 the French Academy was founded. This official body's first mission was to establish and maintain literary standards, a task it set out to accomplish by screening out tens of thousands of words from a language that had been earthy, practical, and one of the richest in Europe during the Renaissance. Some 60 years later the results of this expurgation, already largely implemented over the decades in salons and at court, in literary creations and in the theatre, in the speech of Parisian officials and orators, appeared as the officious *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, in one volume. French henceforth was to be defined as the language, not of the people, not even of Parisians, but of polite society, "la plus saine partie de la Cour et de la Ville," in short, of the aristocracies of blood and wealth plus those who frequented and imitated them. All technical vocabulary was excluded from the dictionary of 1694, as were terms that serve principally for the everyday activities of the working people.[11] The speech of the vast majority of the French fell outside the sphere of influence of this dictionary.

Paradoxically this impoverished ("classical," "purified") French spread as rapidly abroad as it was to spread slowly at home. In France the very arbitrariness of the dictionary, reflecting as it did a minority's depreciative view of the vast majority, might have made it anathema had it not instead been ignored by most, and, because of its lacunae, made the butt of inexhaustible jokes by the witty both outside and among "the only people who really matter."[12] A more potent factor however accounts for the slowness of its impact on all but the elitist segment of society; the provincial dialects, the many regional variants, the countless local patois were too firmly rooted to be seriously affected by an arbitrarily "purged" and officially sanctioned speech. In America, on the contrary, the very fact that the French immigrants came from numerous homelands, each with its distinct speech, made imperative the forging or the adoption of a mutually understandable tongue. Not surprisingly, the idiom of the establishment prevailed. But this speech, "classical" for the most part, was better suited to polite conversation and to commanding or managing others than to the multiple menial tasks of daily life. It was singularly unsuited, as were most of its master speakers, for the harsh quotidian activities of the explorers, traders and pioneer settlers in America.[13]

*Combourg Castle (or Chateau) is on the Brittany peninsula, one of France's distinctive regions (*La France en images*).*



*Anjony Castle in central France, south of Paris, is notable for nearly intact condition and its commanding view (*La France en images*).*

The adoption of "establishment French" in America, not only in the valley of the St. Lawrence but everywhere else in New France, including the Caribbean islands, was to produce a remarkable phenomenon for the ears of later listeners. Wherever the descendants of the early settlers continued to speak French one heard and still today hears across a thousand miles and more in any direction much the same pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical peculiarities of so-called "French-Canadian" and "Cajun."[14] With not much exaggeration one can speak of a "Standard North American French," and it is not adventurous to conclude that America became an aural museum of the speech one would have heard in Paris and environments between the age of Henry IV and Louis XVI. Vocabulary aside – more on that next – the intonation and pronunciation of "Cajun" and "Canadian French," so often mocked by speakers of modern European French, paradoxically can be presumed to be much closer to the sounds of a Montaigne, a Mme de Sévigné, a Racine and a Voltaire than to those of native, educated speakers in France today.

The standard French of the Old Régime needed to be fleshed out if it was to serve as an efficient vernacular.[15] At first the pool of dialects, plus Indian tongues, furnished vocabulary from which certain terms were to emerge as dominant. Later, ubiquitous English was to become the main reservoir.

Europe had no moose but they were common in New France; *orignal* surfaced as the Franco-American for what in France is still seen as an "autre nom de l'élan, au Canada."[16] The word – once indifferently spelled *orignal, orignat, orignas,* from which one can assume that the consonant was not pronounced – came from the Basque language.[17] Most new trees, plants, flowers, vegetables and fruit, land animals, fish and birds received new names, either borrowed from a similar referent in standard French or from a dialect or from the language of local Indians.[18] Cranberries were called *atacas,* a musk-producing rat, a *rat musqué,* the common red robin, a *grive*; a cereal widely used by the Indians was christened *blé d'Inde*; what seemed a variety of the old world's bean (fève) remained *une fève*.[19] France often, and French-America occasionally, hesitated between two or more names. Both worlds now use *rat-musqué* for muskrat but first they tried *ondatra,* borrowed from the Hurons before the middle of the seventeenth century; then France considered *rat d' Amérique,* perhaps sensing it to be more savory. The latter was not entirely abandoned for it is still used by furriers. Many words found today in France for things from America came from Indians words through Spanish.[20] *Pomme d'amour* ceded before a Spanish adaptation of the Aztec word *tomatl.* The latter won out, on both continents, but the victory has been clear only in this century. *Canot, chocolat, maïs, pirogue, tabac* are among Spain's many contributions from America to the French language.

A feature shared by North American and classical French is their simplicity. For some three centuries France's classical authors were praised for their "langage clair et ferme." Beauty achieved through firmness is a matter of skill and talent or genius but understandability can owe much to the language itself. "Purification" had been achieved in part by cutting out doublets, synonyms, technical and learned terms in general, indeed all words that were not deemed to be at once truly French by origin or naturalization and worthy of an "honnête homme." The reductionism of the seventeenth century opened the door for two centuries to an expanded rôle for auxiliaries of all sorts. *Faire* can serve as a good example. It recurs in countless sentences that in today's nurtured French would call for a particular verb or a different formulation. A few examples extracted from classical works can begin to suggest how widespread was this practice in polished speech and writing before the French Revolution. While in many instances the construction with *faire* may still be heard today in France the preferred or more elegant or necessary form is the one in parentheses: *faire un miracle* (accomplir un miracle); *faire un changement* (causer un changement); *faire sa charge* (exercer un emploi); *faire la comédie* (jouer . . .); *faire un combat* (livrer . . .); *faire des questions* (poser . . .); *faire des cris* (pousser . . .); *cela fait contre vous* (cela milite contre vous), etc. There were many other uses of *faire* including some with prepositions that are now archaic in France but active in America (*e.g. faire d'un juge* for: se donner l'air d'un juge). In addition to special uses of être, avoir, devoir, some recurrent verbs like *mettre* and *voir* lent themselves to many uses now obsolete or rare in France. The following examples can serve to suggest the many uses of the latter: *mettre ses affaires en ordre* (régler ses affaires); *mettre les livres en ordre* (ranger les livres); *mettre dans l'abîme* (précipiter . . .); *mettre au fond d'un puits* (descendre . . .); *mettre sa vie en danger* (exposer sa vie); *l'avocat va voir votre affaire*

*The Loire River Valley, with its magnificent chateaus, is France's most celebrated tourist area. This is a view near the old city of Orleans (*La France en images*).*

(l'avocat va examiner . . .); *elle aime se voir au miroir* (elle aime se regarder dans la glace); *c'est un homme à voir* (c'est un homme à fréquenter). The same spirit characterized numberless aspects of classical French that survive in America. If one excepts hilarious effects sought in farces and comedies, Old Regime French preferred descriptive constructions in "qui" over the precise medical terms that triumphed in this century. Again the word in parentheses is the expected expression in France today: *un remède qui amollit la peau* (un émollient); *un remède qui apaise le mal* (un palliatif); *un remède qui calme* (un lénitif); *un remède qui donne des forces* (un tonique); *un remède qui fait dormir* (un soporifique); *un remède qui fait vomir* (un vomitif; émétique).

Speakers of French in France and America share the same language in most respects, much as English-speaking Americans and Canadians share a common language with the British. The differences in both instances can be shown to be numerous indeed if one chooses to collect and stress them; they are conspicuous in the speech of unsophisticated persons, to the point at times of making communication (English or French) seem virtually impossible. A slight effort, some patience, and a degree of good will can make the speech of the farmer in Devonshire or the fisherman in the Gaspé Peninsula quite understandable, and savory besides.[21] Here are a few of the many differences that exist between North American French and Hexagonal.[22]

| **N.A. French** | **American English** | **Hexagonal** |
|---|---|---|
| abrier | cover, shelter | recouvrir (cf abriter) |
| achaler (cf nonchalant) | pester | ennuyer |
| "asteur" (à cette heure) | at this time | à l'heure qu'il est |
| besson | twin | jumeau |
| beurrée | bread and . . . | tartine |
| brunante | nightfall | tombée de la nuit |
| catin | doll | poupée |
| chandelle | candle | bougie |
| col | tie | cravate |
| collet | (shirt or coat) collar | col |
| couverte | blanket | couverture |
| couverture | roof | toiture |
| égoïne | hand saw | scie (à main) |
| grafigner | scratch | égratigner |
| lutte | wrestling | wrestling |
| maganer | mistreat | maltraiter |
| menterie | lie | mensonge |
| plancher | floor | parquet |
| rôtie | toast | toast |
| tanner | vex, tire out | ennuyer, fatiguer |

One could at this point be tempted to believe that North American-French, despite the few innovations mentioned earlier, is classical French miraculously preserved in the New World. In fact the language underwent profound changes over the centuries, mainly, as we have already suggested, in the expansion of its vocabulary to meet new conditions. In time the dominant influence came from American-Canadian English as the commercial-industrial, then technological revolutions penetrated into every corner of the continent. Living for the most part in its own world, often in small communities or in rural areas, the American French, encouraged by a paternal and not rarely autocratic clergy, had stayed clear of the changes taking place among their English-speaking neighbors. When the revolution did come to the French communities, it came full-blown, with a well-developed terminology. The

French quickly adopted the new vocabulary. Among the many adaptations are words or compounds of the following kind:

| N.A. French | American English | Hexagonal |
|---|---|---|
| balai électrique | sweeper, vacuum cleaner | aspirateur |
| la bande | band | la fanfare |
| bande militaire | military band | la musique |
| (barre de) savon | (bar of) soap | (pain de) savon |
| barre de chocolat | chocolate bar | tablette de chocolat |
| un block, bloque | block | une rue, un pâté |
| boîte d'alarme | alarm box | avertisseur d'incendie |
| la boîte des témoins | witness stand, box | le banc des témoins |

No words took root more rapidly than those of machines, especially those of the new machine par excellence, the automobile, often then called in American English and in American French, "the machine," "la machine." A short list can suggest the results:

| N.A. French | American English | Hexagonal |
|---|---|---|
| brake | brake | frein |
| choke | choke | starter |
| coffre | trunk | coffre arrière |
| engin | engine | moteur |
| hood | hood | capot |
| porte | door | portière |
| roue (de direction) | (steering) wheel | volant |
| siège | seat | banquette |
| starter | starter | démarreur |
| vîtres | windows | glaces |

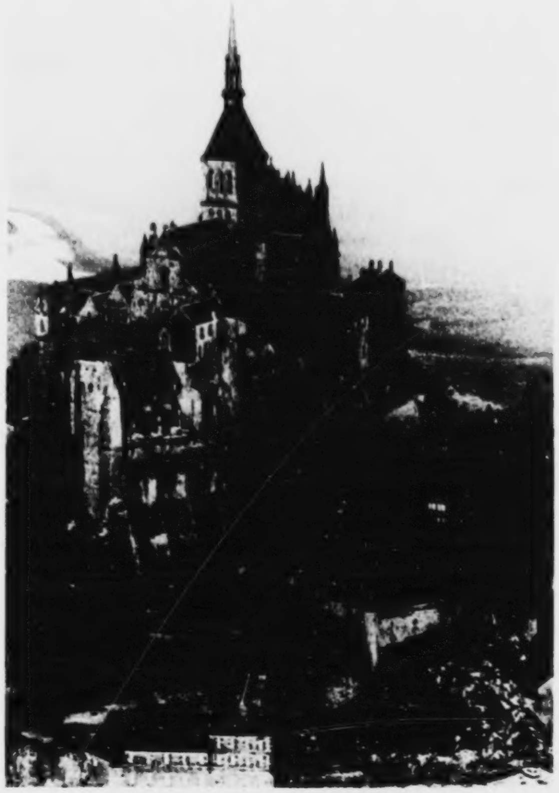
As we can see, terms were either borrowed directly or translated literally, though in many cases they could have imposed themselves spontaneously (coffre, porte, roue, siège, vitres). This choice of words for the glamorous machine has often made the American-French's European cousins smile, none however quite as much as *char*. In Québec and beyond *char* (à moteur) triumphed as easily over automobile as had *car* in English speaking Canada and in the United States, *motor car* in Britain, *Wagen* in Germany, *voiture* in France.[23] Until the turn of the century the French on both continents had used *char* for a variety of vehicles, much as Normandy and the English world used the Franco-Norman form *car*. Like its near synonym *voiture, char* had long referred to a wheeled vehicle drawn by animals.[24]

The smile, understandable enough, owes something to a lack of historical knowledge or perspective. In World War I the introduction of an armored vehicle (coded "water tank" during its wartime production to keep the secret from the enemy) required a new name; the British code word stuck in the English speaking world; France chose *char blindé* (armored car) and *char d'assaut*, soon reduced to *char*. World War II firmly established this meaning for *char*, virtually obliterating its earlier significations for speakers of Hexagonal.[25]

Other automotive terms also help to cast light on attitudes that guided word formation. The French of America, like their continental neighbors, regularly took the shortest route: all the illuminating objects became *lumières* (lights) so that one has in Quebec and beyond the equivalents of bright lights, dim lights, panel light, tail light, etc. The French, not unlike the British, preferred more sophisticated terms. France uses *phares* for what the English and Americans call head lamps, headlights; the metaphor of fire covers other usages (*e.g., feux de position* for parking lights). The steering wheel in North American French is a *roue* (wheel), the shortened form of the earlier *roue de direction*; France uses *volant*, a term originally designating a fly-wheel, also called a *roue-volante*.[26] North American French adopted, unchanged, the word *dashboard* (a board once at the front of a buggy or other vehicle to protect against the mud splashed on front seat occupants as the horse ran); Hexagonal hesitated between "planche de bord," "planche tablier," then, at least in Paris, settled on "tableau de bord" (instrument panel, instrument board), a term borrowed from, or shared with, aviation.

To cope adequately with the pronunciation of North American French one would need to compare it at length with a range of pronunciations in France, past and present, and that would require a treatise.[27] If one excepts glides under specific conditions in American French, as in *petit* [petsi] or [ptsi] instead of [peti] or [pti], or in *vertu*, which is pronounced with an extra sh sound between the t and u, the pronunciation of French in America is very near the one that must have prevailed in classical French, including the existence of two i sounds, one of them close to our English sound in bit, gift, mitt.[28] What in Literary French-Hexagonal is deemed the proper pronunciation today was, in some instances, deemed vulgar before the Revolution. For example, the court and its numerous imitators had pronounced *noyer* (to drown) as [né-yé], roughly "neyáy," with *né* as in net or Annette. The Académie called for [nwé-yé] "nweyáy," which was deemed pedantic by the courtiers and much of the aristocracy though much less objectionable than the widespread pronunciation found among servants and, not rarely, in other members of the lower classes, *i.e.,* [nwa-yé] "nwahyáy," which in the twentieth century is the only socially acceptable pronunciation in France. From the vulgar to the elegant, the pronunciation under the Old Régime for *loyal* was [lwa-yal] "lwahyáhl" (*i.e.,* today's pronunciation), [lwé-yal] "lwayyáhl," [lé-yal] layyáhl; for *je boirai* (I shall drink), [je bwá-Ré], [je bwé-Ré], [je bé-Ré]; for *Mont royal* [mõ-Rwa-yal], [mõ-Rwé-yal], [mõ-Ré-yal], the latter today spelled *Montréal* from the name of the city itself. Mont-Royal, pronounced [mõ-Rwa-yal] mõRwahyál, is retained for the name of a hill and also a suburb where until recently most residents spoke English.[29] To the delicate ear of the courtiers and the rest of central France's èlite, "la plus saine partie de la Cour et de la Ville," few noises were more ungenteel and offensive than the recurrent sound of *wa* ("wah") for words in *oi* (toi et moi, la loi du roi, . . .). One reads of this wa, wa, wa, wa as "le jappement des chiens," the yapping of dogs, and indeed the "honnête gens" 's favorite word for the populace was "la canaille," an Italicism that had replaced the native "chiennaille," a pack of dogs.

The proper pronunciation of another age, of another France, lives on in many regions of North America, from Nova Scotia, Maine, Michigan and Minnesota to Missouri, Louisiana and contiguous states. French flourishes in



*Many consider Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy the world's most spectacular site (*La France en images*).*

some regions, notably in Québec, and lately seems to have found a new lease on life, for example in northern Ontario and western Louisiana, but in many areas it will not make it into the twenty-first century, or barely. Within the lifetime of a surviving few, active French has faded from Illinois, Indiana, and probably elsewhere. Nearly everywhere the old sounds are being replaced by a Hexagonal pronunciation of sorts, or by an authentic "Parisian accent" within a minority that is determined to keep its heritage, but modernized. One has to talk to elderly people, usually rural, to still encounter the spontaneous use of the imperfect subjunctive ("J'aurais voulu que vous vinssiez . . .") or to hear the -ill- of *ailleurs* pronounced [aljoe:R], as Louis XIII and XIV would have said it and perhaps Louis XVI.

American French, long an orphan in a distant land, was rediscovered by the French, often with great delight, during World War I, when American and Canadian soldiers fought on French soil. Memories on both sides faded quickly it seems, perhaps because so many tried to obliterate from their minds the events of those years. What did result around 1920 was, not yet the will but the thought of a French people in Canada who would be rid of "les Anglais," a term that could embrace all speakers of English. The Second World War forged more durable bonds apparently, not however among the population as a whole. The explosive awakening in both France and Québec, indeed in the West, came two centuries after the Treaty of Paris when the President of the French Republic, General Charles de Gaulle, a man conscious of history, a fine histrion, and a finer statesman touched the old chords in an ill-treated people slow to anger by issuing a challenge much as he had done in 1940 to a defeated people: "Vive le Québec libre!" To the long suffering "Canayens" it was heard as "Let the French be free; throw off the yoke of your masters for they only manipulate you through your unwillingness to demand a share of the power and the wealth." The English speaking majority felt threatened and panicked; most English publications, plus some in French and many in other languages, stated, then repeated, that De Gaulle had called on Quebec to declare its independence. In fact the French President's words were rhetorically forceful but not ambiguous. A master of the French language, indeed a writer of distinction, De Gaulle had called for a free Quebec ("Québec libre") and not for a "Québec indépendant," an independent state. With scarcely any exceptions the English press, by design or fear, fused what De Gaulle said (take heart and do something to improve your situation) with the program of the F.L.Q., an aggressive group that wanted Quebec literally to declare its independence from English Canada.[30]

After 1967, the year of the French President's visit, the people of Montreal began to use the French language openly once again, even at work. The spirit spread across a shadowy New France. In the heat of their rekindled anger at having so long been humbled, the Québecois vented their passion not only against their English speaking neighbors but also against France – for it was the derisive laughter, "le ricanement," of the French which had galled them above all else. Tongue in cheek, the militant adopted "joual," the speech of the least educated city workers and peasants, as the symbol of the new Revolution. They wrote tales, plays, songs in "joual" and, if one goes by countless editorials and articles published on both continents, may have succeeded in nearly making the world believe that "joual" and North American French were one and the same thing.[31] Even sophisticated scholars and thoughtful men and women of many callings who would not for an instant believe that Cockney is a synonym for "the English of most Britons," quietly seemed to swallow and repeat the propaganda of a vociferous minority whose true merit lies in the courage with which it enthusiastically opted to defend what seemd a lost cause and sought to right a wrong.

Let us repeat here that educated North American speakers of French use the same idiom that is spoken and written by persons of comparable education in France. The differences, when they exist, are in the accent or in the kind of minor vocabulary differences that characterize the speech and publications of every region in Francophonia, Lille for example, or Bordeaux, or Lyon, or Marseille, or Montreal, or Geneva, or Brussels, or St. Boniface facing Winnipeg across the Red River. A "français familier" may survive in America as a regional difference; the man who continues to say "char" in his family may use "voiture" at school or at work. The mass of Franco-Americans speaks, or until recently spoke, an archaic vernacular generally as correct as the vernacular of the common man in France. Two things have been happening in recent years at an accelerated pace: either the French is being modified even more under the influence of English and can be expected to disappear entirely within the lifetime of today's young people, or the French in America accepts to follow the model of Hexagonal, in which case it may thrive for an indefinite period of time in some parts of North America.

As a final note let us recall that after the exuberance of the revolt Québec turned hesitatingly toward France and found an extended hand. New relationships were created, soon spreading to other regions. The new bonds have already produced results so impressive that they seem destined to bring about profound changes throughout the North American French-speaking community. One need not be a seer to affirm as I did earlier that the French of America that survives the twentieth century will have become at least as close to Hexagonal as most regional varieties of French in Europe. Pure Old Régime French in its American avatar has been fading away. It is sad to record in anticipation the passing of a tongue that tenaciously held out for centuries in its besieged bastion before being rescued by a nonconforming leader appropriately named de Gaulle, whose claim to fame will surely forever remain that, "parafoudre consentant," he stood up when others feared to budge, and rekindled pride and faith in the future where they had all but disappeared.

Armand A. Renaud was born in the Detroit area in 1918. Maternal ancestors came from Provence and Guyenne; a paternal ancestor, originally from Isle-de-France, accompanied Antoine L. de la Mothe Cadillac when a group of French explorers and traders founded Fort-Pontchartrain du Détroit in 1701. After serving in W.W.II, Renaud studied in Detroit, Paris, Santander and Florence; he earned his Ph.D. at Yale, where he taught three years. From 1953 to 1957 he taught at Northwestern University, then joined the faculty of the University of Minnesota as a specialist in the literature of the 16th and 17th centuries. As Professor Emeritus he now offers one graduate course a year since 1983.

Renaud has published dozens of articles and hundreds of reviews. Last fall he was Guest Editor for a special issue of *Oeuvres & Critiques* devoted to HERMETICISM. He recently completed a monograph on Corneille's theatre and now concentrates on the composition of a major work, long in progress as research: *The Perception of the Orient in the Literatures of Europe, 1450-1700*.

Renaud has spent some 12 years in France, never for more than one year at a time, usually for periods of several weeks or a few months only. He has travelled extensively in Europe, Asia and Latin America. The study of languages and dialects in America, Europe, Africa and elsewhere has been a lifetime avocation.

## Notes

[1] It may not be wholly relevant to recall something André Gide once said in his *Journal* about the blinding effect of preconceived ideas, but I shall say it anyway, in a paraphrase: The new quickly draws our attention, the familiar may have to be pointed out often for we grow inured to what we do not care to see.

[2] Known in the United States as the "French and Indian Wars" – a rather parochial, prepossessed view – the conflict in fact was between the major European powers (Austria, France and Russia on one side, Great Britain and Prussia on the other). The Franco-British encounters, with Indians in both America and India serving more as surrogates than allies, were continuations of a colonial struggle that had broken out long before. The Seven Year's War, as it is called elsewhere, established Prussia as a mighty force in Europe, Great Britain as a new leader in overseas colonization.

[3] *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1954) under Quebec (vol. 18, 836B).

[4] *New France* was by itself a virtual empire in the New World, potentially the gem of a far more vast world empire, the real "Premier Empire" of France. *Canada* for the French had been only a part of New France, specifically the domain of the St. Lawrence and its watershed. Under the English the term was to be extended to all of Britain's colonial domains north of what became the United States of America. More important, the inhabitants in these colonies, plus many a former French subject of New France who never lived in what once was, or in what today is, Canada, came to be called abusively "French-Canadians" by the English speaking population. In this essay we refer to the descendants of the settlers of New France as Franco-Americans or the French of (North) America.

[5] The so often heard view "It was, it is, in the best interest of the French-Canadians" requires no comment for persons exercising their critical faculties; the others should try to penetrate Gide's observation stated above.

[6] See Russell Scott Young's *Vieilles Chansons de Nouvelle-France,* Les Presses Universitaires Laval, Quebec, 1956. "La Vendée" lives again in songs, and Paris, and castles, and the king, and queen, and even Napoleon (Vive le roi et la reine! Vive Napoléon"), for the Corsican briefly appeared as the savior who could reunite Nouvelle France and France. Of course Napoleon and the French in America shared a common passion, their dislike of the English.

[7] Manuals of proper speech ("le bon parler") were numerous in the last decades of the 17th century and during the 18th. One of the mistakes often stressed is the vulgar pronunciation of "oi."

[8] Need we recall that though the dreams which brought about the American and French revolutions were much the same, and for good reasons, the revolutions occurred under quite different conditions and were very dissimilar.

[9] The richness of the language before the classical doctrine prevailed can be gauged by the size of Edmond Huguet's *Dictionnaire de la langue française du XVIe siècle*, Champion, then Didier, Paris, 1925-1967. This work is in seven large volumes yet it contains only words that are no longer commonly used in modern French or that have a different meaning or a different range of meanings today. Many a word in Huguet's dictionary is still in use today in provinces of France, especially in small communities and rural areas. They also very frequently survive in North American French.

[10] "Check with the haymarket porters" (les crocheteurs du Port au foin), was his regular reply. François Malherbe (1555-1628) did want to purge the language of undesirable vocabulary, but he had in mind

to eradicate from "pure French" words forged from Greek, Latin, Italian, or borrowed from provincial dialects. Pierre Corneille's first editions, later "purified," also reflect the state of French in the first half of the 17th century.

[11] The spirit of the *Dictionnaire* appears in an early decision made by the assembled members to exclude quotations from existing works; instead, examples were to be invented by the academicians themselves. In all fairness it must be said that the government, first in the person of Cardinal Richelieu, was the driving force behind the project. Most academicians had little taste for the task; absenteeism long remained a major problem; when in session the members worked lackadaisically.

[12] One of them was the satirist Antoine Furetière, an academician until excluded from l'Académie. He composed his own dictionary, published posthumously in Holland. Though his *Dictionnaire universel, contenant généralement tous les mots français* . . . fell far short of the claims in the title it had the merit of drawing attention to the foolhardiness of using purgation as a valid lexicographical doctrine. Furetière left out many banausic terms and not a few words he seemed to find difficult to define, among them air, commerce, honnête, sensible. Furetière was quickly plundered by others working mainly outside the reach of French authorities, including the Jesuit authors of the encyclopedic, often revised and enlarged, *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*, famous in the 18th century.

[13] The officers and prelates in America were regularly younger sons of noble families; the administrators, often trained in law, were routinely drawn from comfortable middle-class homes; the missionaries and pastors, though not rarely born in humble milieux, had been sent to college early, destined for the Church, and thenceforth had had little to do in France or elsewhere with the common chores of life other than to tend souls. For speech today in France, see notes 22 and 31.

[14] *Cajun*, Old Régime French as spoken in West Louisiana and by pockets of speakers in neighboring states, is an Anglicized pronunciation of Acadien, the language of the people of Acadia (now parts of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Maine, . . .) who endured much over the centuries from the feuding French and English, then were deported in 1755 and dispersed to the south for refusing to take an oath of loyalty to Great Britain. Acadien or Cajun has some distinctive features. The surviving Old Régime French found in the south of the United States and in the West Indies should not be confused with the Creole of the islands, which is also spoken in the south alongside Cajun. Creole, like Michef, the speech of the Metis in western Canada, have roots in French but under the impact of other idioms followed their own development and are quite distinct languages, with dialects and variants. One can compare Creole and Michef, on the one hand, with Afrikaans, or Cape Dutch, since all three are creolized languages and not linguae francae, and, on the other hand, with the Sabir of North Africa, a French-based pidgin, the Weskos of Africa, the Bêche-de-mer of the East Indies and other pidgins rooted in English.

[15] So long as French was left to evolve freely in France no linguistic differences based on social milieux existed; the lord spoke like the villager, the master like his servant. Changes came rapidly after the Renaissance. The gulf between the purified or classical language and the French spoken by native speakers of the lower classes (tradesmen, craftsmen, servants, laborers, . . .) had become so great before the end of the 17th century that the speech of Parisians came to be seen as the "patois parisien." This "patois," or living language, seemed to dissolve as the French Revolution progressed, for the speech of the masses blended into classical French to form the new amalgam from which Hexagonal flows today. Among the references that document these phenomena, see Albert Dauzat's *Phonétique et grammaire historique de la langue française*, Paris, Larousse, 1950. Also see notes 22 and 31.

[16] The definition of *orignal* in the Petit Larousse. One encounters very few persons in France who have ever heard of the word.

[17] From the Basque *oregna* or its plural *oregnac*. Let us note in passing that consonants at the end of French words were no longer heard by the dawn of the 17th century. Pronouncing some of them, especially in ancient or exotic words, came in vogue during the second half of the 17th century, and many more were "rehabilitated" from the 19th century on. Before the Revolution, and even afterwards in some regions, the French word *contact* was sounded as [kõ-ta] and not [kõ-takt] as it is today, *fils* as [fi] and not [fis], *parc* as [par] and not [park], etc. Vestiges of the earlier pronunciation remain in N.A. French.

[18] Other Europeans in America did much the same thing. A comparison of what the same names represent in English or Portuguese or Spanish America and in Europe can be an eye-opener for anyone who has not done this systematically.

[19] In France, and among some Franco-Americans, *atacas* is canneberges, *blé d'Inde* is maïs, *grive* is rouge-gorge (grive in France is the English thrush).

[20] Even as French influence became preponderant in Europe the prestige of Spanish remained great – greater for a time than that of Italian. The Golden Age would end only in the second half of the 17th century. Spain's impact, mostly on the theatre, literature and language, resulted in part from dynastic unions. The Bourbons married Infantas; each arrived at the French court with a retinue of "domestics" of high and low estate, most of them speaking Spanish only or affecting to do so.

[21] Both France and the British Isles have many variations in speech and, in their native state, these are far greater than the not minor variations one can hear in different parts of the United States. The current linguistic reality in "Francophonia" will be briefly sketched at the end of this paper. See note 31 and also note 22.

[22] *Hexagonal*, a neologism of the '60s, refers to the speech used daily in metropolitan France by a broad spectrum of speakers, most of them middle-class or aspiring to be perceived as members of the best bourgeoisie. It must be understood in the light of *Literary French*, which is not only the nurtured language

of literature but also that of "serious" books and journals. Literary French serves, especially on formal occasions, as the idiom of legislators, administrators, prelates, many a pastor, most teachers, and members of the professional classes in general. This learned and cultivated form of French is much the same in Paris and in Ottawa. Literary French in France, in Quebec, in the Antilles, in Tahiti, in Geneva, in Brussels, written or spoken, functions today much as it has functioned for centuries, *i.e.,* as the latter-day and slightly Ciceronian Latin of Francophonia. To emphasize that it has changed greatly over the centuries even as it remained the lingua-franca of educated speakers of French everywhere would be to belabor the obvious. Hexagonal thrives in symbiosis with literary French but has its own referential reality. It is or wants to be the vigorous language of those who aspire to live fully and successfully in the mainstream of French society. Unlike Literary French, Hexagonal is not haunted by the cult of Gallic purity. Not only does it readily adopt new words, it seeks them out, engenders them, nourishes them, procreates scions and breeds families of terms. Literally thousands of neologisms have been brought into French within the last three decades – a majority of them from the English speaking world. Though a cultural reality, Hexagonal sought to define itself in geographical terms; it is a reaction within the boundaries of metropolitan France to the varieties of French spoken in territories that once belonged to France, or, in neighboring or distant lands, that may still be in some respects linked to France today. The mythical "Parisian French" refers to a vague reality that hovers between Literary French and Hexagonal, with specifically urban resonances that may be those of Bordeaux or Lille or Lyon. Hexagonal is used at times as a synonym of "French spoken in France."

[23] Automobile, coined by the French, first used as an adjective (in "voiture automobile"), was a learned equivalent of "horseless," or "self-propelled," as in horseless carriage. Soon used as a noun, automobile, shortened to auto, had great success everywhere. Much earlier the British had built a horseless vehicle and called it a "steam wagon"; other terms like locomobile and motor carriage had a short life.

[24] The vicissitudes of words is reflected in the capsulized history of the following near synonyms. Both *char* and *car* originally came from a Gallic word for a four-wheeled vehicle. The French and English words carriage, chariot, charrette, cart, carrosse derive from the same source. *Voiture,* a wagon, had been formed on the Latin *vectura* and originally applied to any means of transport. France borrowed *wagon* from the English in 1698 to designate a covered cart or waggon. When trains were invented, France considered using either *wagon* or *voiture,* with some interest in *chariot,* for freight cars and passenger cars. Some of this hesitation subsists today in Hexagonal; witness *wagon à bagages, wagon de marchandises, wagon frigorifique, wagon-bar, wagon-lit, wagon-restaurant, voiture-restaurant, voiture à marchandises, voiture de chemin de fer,* etc. The French in America chose *char* for all railroad cars: *char parloir, char dortoir, char à dîner, char à bagages,* etc. *Char* also serves for a streetcar in America; France uses *tramway,* borrowed from the British.

[25] Rare, specialized uses remain in France, and in Québec, not commonly heard today: *char* in the sense of ancient chariot, *char à bancs* for what the English called a charabanc, etc.

[26] A fly-wheel controls the regularity of motion in a machine. That thought leads to control of the turning mechanism in a car. No less sophisticated reasoning is evident in *phare,* once the brightest kind of light, found in lighthouse beacons. *Phare* comes from the Greek Pharos, the name of an island near Alexandria, Egypt, famous for its lighthouse.

[27] Perspective. The pronunciation of English around the world, perhaps within the United States alone, certainly within the British Isles, would call for a study even more vast, a reality rendered hazy by the fact that, on radio, on television, in movies, in lectures, in interviews, one hears, and grows familiar with, a wide variety of pronunciations and intonations. Most speakers of French hear either only "Parisian French" or "Canadian French," or slight variants of the latter in "Acadien" and "Cajun."

[28] There are various means of checking the pronunciation of French before the Revolution, one of them being rhymes in (the original versions of) poems, another being the correspondences of lords, ladies and persons of the upper bourgeoisie who are known to have spoken elegant French yet often wrote alphabetically, *i.e.,* without regard to orthography. Many an aristocrat had little schooling – reading and writing being skills commoners could afford to spend years acquiring, then using to earn a livelihood. For the glides, compare American and British pronunciation, *e.g.,* in words like: assurance, attitude, issue, picture, vicissitude, virtue, . . .

[29] No attempt is made here to represent the proper sound of r. Before the Revolution it was trilled in the upper circles, and even among most of the people in France, a pronunciation preserved in some elite groups and at the opera until at least the eve of W.W.II. A "fatty r" (le grasseyement) characterized the "menu people" of Paris in the 17th century and found its way to at least one section of Quebec City, where it subsists, or did until after World War II. It is the *r* one heard in Maurice Chevalier's voice and in that of Edith Piaf.

[30] The Front de Libération Québecois can be seen as part of a worldwide climate, linked to Vietnam. The yearnings they embodied in Quebec were not new, nor were incipient struggles in some milieux, but the explosion, not ungenerous, dates from 1963. The F.L.Q.'s challenge was modelled on other campaigns of terror that within the last half century had produced results, with promise of more to come, among them activities in Ireland, in India, in Palestine-Israel, in Indochina, in Algeria. In a very real sense, De Gaulle's prestigious presence and symbolic gift defused a perilous situation by transferring the compacted energy of the F.L.Q. to the people as a whole, thence to the rest of the "old French" on the American continent. With De Gaulle there emerged an image of legitimacy and respectability, latter-day variations of the "gloire-honneur-vertu" which had been so very important to their Old Régime ancestors and,

perhaps thanks to the clergy, never completely abandoned in the ghost of la Nouvelle France.

[31] *Joual* is less a particular idiom, as is the "langue verte" of France, than a way of articulating America's French. As a symbol of dissent and unicity ("we are a unique and united people, Québecois, not French, 'Canayens' not Canadians, not Americans, and certainly not British, whatever the myth and however often we are reminded of our King or Queen"), "Joual" willingly uses popular and trivial words, plus as much slang as one can find in a speech never addicted to veiled expressions. By contrast, France's "langue verte," the lively speech of the working class, perhaps comparable to Cockney in London, has its roots in the reality of generations. In its pure form, "la langue verte," which is not simply slang and is not the same as the language of the "milieu" – with which it however has affinities, for good reasons – is virtually unintelligible to persons who do not come out of the working class suburbs or spend much time there, as did, for example, Jean Cocteau. It is the native speech of bricklayers, plumbers, roofers and once the mother tongue of many an entertainer or writer, among them Maurice Chevalier, Paul Eluard, Jean Gabin, Henri Jeanson. For specialized uses, the French also have specialized slangs (argots) and jargons, some elaborated over generations if not centuries. Linguists also distinguish within "le français courant" (usual French of anyone moderately educated) three discernible kinds of speech: "la langue soutenue," which is Literary French-Hexagonal, "la langue familière," the means of communication within the family and among intimates, "la langue populaire" or the *sermo cotidianus* of our day, that is to say, the idiom of the common people, understood by everyone in France. In addition to these varieties of French, provincial dialects and local patois still exist in Europe's Francophonia three centuries after the Age of the Sun King. "Normand," "Lorrain" and "Wallon" are the most tenacious of the major dialects, but even these quite distinct speeches have lost much ground in our century, especially after the Second World War. Finally, let us not forget that perhaps one Frenchman in three speaks another language than French at his mother's knee. In addition to the Basques and the Catalans at the opposite ends of the Pyrenees, the Bretons in parts of Brittany, the Fleming in Flanders, the German speaking Alsatians and their kinsmen in a part of Lorraine, the speakers of an Italic dialect in the region of Monaco, another dozen million French citizens in the south of France (le Midi) still use the language of the troubadours, Occitan (with regional and local variations) as their native tongue at home and even as the usual idiom of many a small community. These languages and dialects and patois may be heard in French churches and some "options" are now available for a section of the state administered "baccalauréat" but everyone in France, or nearly, now also speaks French, purely or with a local flavor, for French is the obligatory language of schools, and so of success in life.

## Bibliography and Research

The means are no less important than the tools. Among the many volumes now available to study North American French, glossaries and dictionaries, with examples of usage, may be the best instruments we possess. These should be used as data that require confirmation in the field, *i.e.,* they are to be used in conjunction with trips to numerous areas (Canada, Caribbean, United States), for stays of hours at least, preferably days. This is equally valid for the penetration into the French dialects of Belgium, France and Switzerland. Each one must be patiently and gently probed if one hopes to reach the native speech regularly hidden under the surface layer, plate or patina, of the only kind of French outsiders expect and appear to respect. What they seek they see.

Few libraries on this continent possess dictionaries of French dialects and patois; they are available in the regions where each is spoken and are to be found, usually at hand on reference shelves, in the central library of France, the Bibliothèque Nationale. Three of the dictionaries for North American French, in this instance Canadian French, with special interest in Québecois, are to be found at the Wilson Library of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

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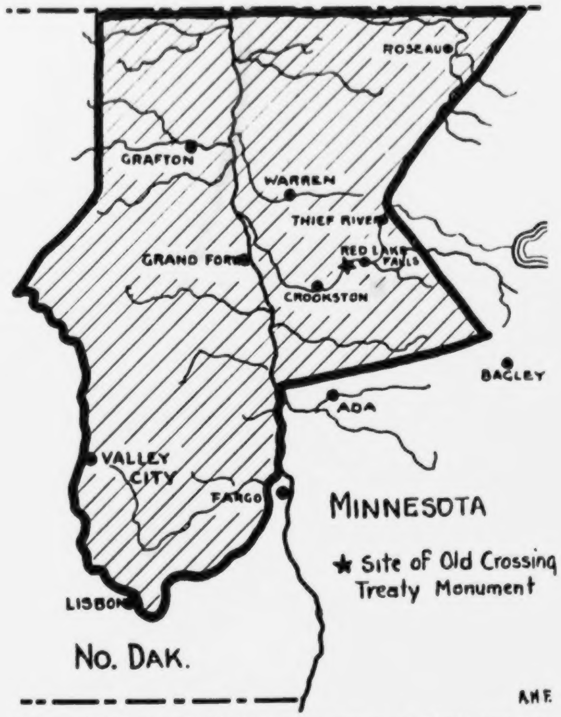
# French Presence in the Red River Valley
# Part I: A History of the Métis to 1870

by Virgil Benoit

This paper discusses the early history of the Métis, or, French-Indian people of Manitoba, Minnesota and North Dakota. The approach is geocultural and geopolitical for it considers not only the region the Métis inhabited and their culture, but also the unique political and social realities of the Canadian-United States frontier from 1780 to 1870. The argument of the paper is significant in that it brings up the problem of distinct cultures and societies within the context of modern nationalism. The question Métis cultural history poses is a complex one involving ethnic diversity and national identity. It is basically a matter of cultural distinction and national perception on territorial, state, provincial and national levels. The field of study which considers cultural-political geography offers many insights into nineteenth-century Métis history, for it has given us a means for understanding the cultural and political complexity of our modern world which has been for the most part interpreted by nation-building theoreticians (Mikesell, 1983).



*Area ceded to United States by terms of Old Crossing Treaty.*

The main geographical area referred to in this study is situated on either side of the Red River of the North with the southernmost point being marked by the city of Grand Forks. On the Minnesota side, it includes an area referred to as the Red Lake Watershed District. Within this northwestern portion of Minnesota the water flows to the Upper and Lower Red Lakes into the Red Lake River which after some 196 river miles meets the Red River of the North at East Grand Forks, Minnesota. Several rivers including the Thief and the Clearwater along with approximately a dozen of their tributaries flow into the Red Lake River. The major lakes in this area are remnants of the old glacial Lake Agassiz. Within a few miles of the east bank of the Red Lake River begins the glacial Lake Plain area which consists of long beach-like ridges running parallel to the Red River. It is at this ridge that the Red River Valley commences. The Valley is the result of sedimentation on the bed of glacial Lake Agassiz. Some forty to sixty kilometers to the west of the Red River lies a formation called the Pembina Escarpment which marks the boundary between the Red River Valley and the Glaciated Plains to the west. As one travels west over the Prairie, the Glaciated Plains are interrupted by the Turtle Mountains which have a relief of 300 to 500 feet. The rivers in northwestern North Dakota which flow to the Red River include the Pembina, Park, Turtle, Forest, and Tongue (Bluemle 1977; *Overall Plan,* 1972).

Pre-settlement vegetation in this area was made up of hardwood forest which bordered the Red River and was found in a scattered pattern elsewhere. Bogs and swamps were especially found in the Red Lake area. Otherwise, the area was dominated by grassland. Because of the terrain and vegetation, a wide

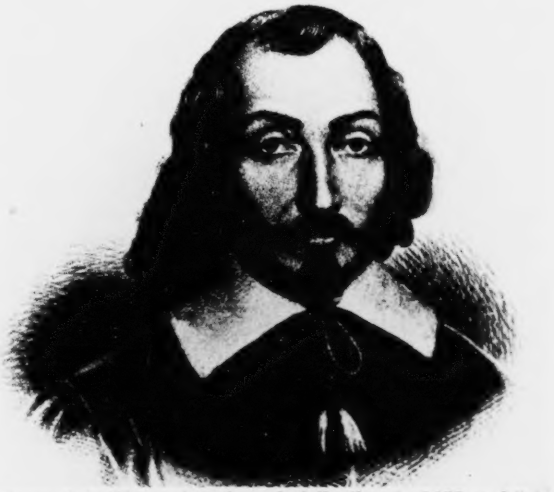
*This memorial statue was erected by the state of Minnesota to mark the site of the Old Crossing Treaty signing. The brief statement on the stone pedestal explains the significance of the treaty, which ceded a huge tract of Indian land to the United States.*

variety of animals, including buffalo, deer, bear, fox, muskrat, and beaver thrived in the area. Although American Indians did not heavily inhabit the area in early times, various tribes did consider it a valuable hunting ground (Borchert 1980).

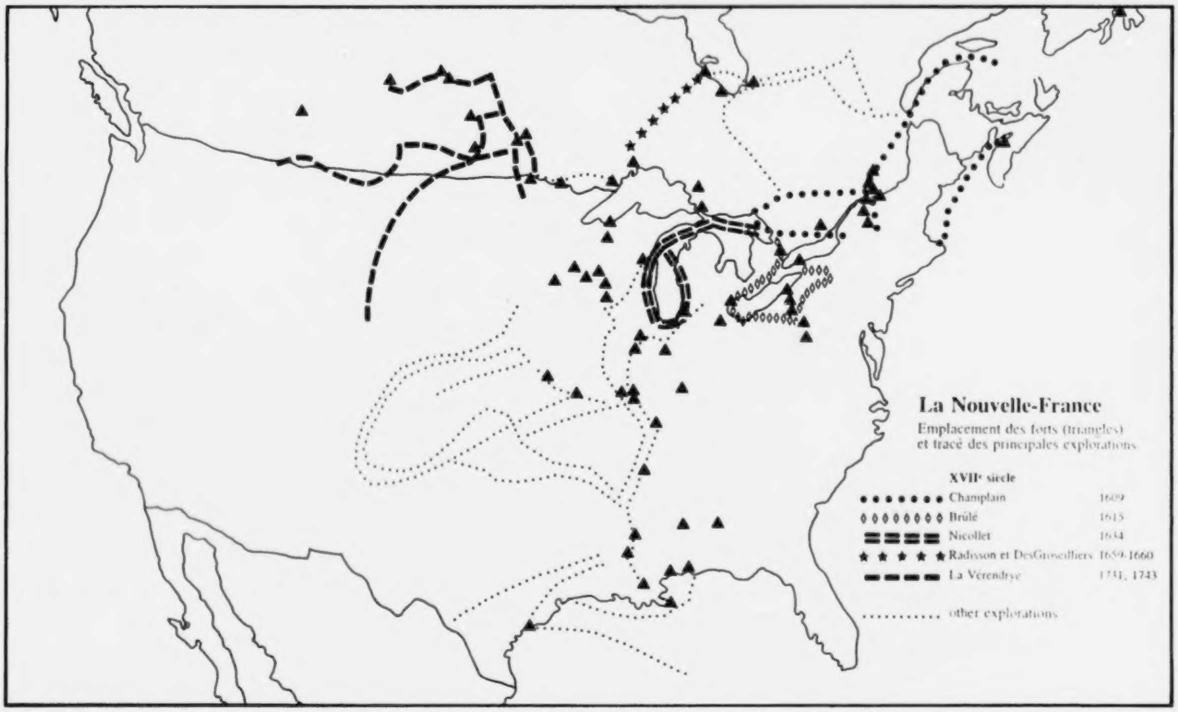
The area under study corresponds in large part to the portion located in the United States of the Selkirk concession known as the Assiniboia Grant made in 1811 by the Hudsons Bay Company. The purpose of that grant was to provide territory enough to support the Red River Settlement which Lord Selkirk located at the confluence of the Assiniboia and Red Lake Rivers at present-day Winnipeg.

United States Census figures for the year 1980 indicate that within the area considered in this study there was a total of 7,492 persons who identified themselves as being of French origin and a total of 17,327 who indicated that they were French and other (1980 Sample Census Data). Until the 1870s most people who claimed some French ancestry were of French and Indian background. It was in the last decades of the nineteenth century that French-Canadian farmers arrived in the area. These people who came to buy land were of a Québec sedentary tradition whose life-style contrasted with their cultural predecessors in the area, the semi-nomadic Métis. It was nonetheless over the same trails which the Métis had traced from St. Paul to Pembina to Bottineau that French-Canadian settlers travelled to arrive finally in towns often founded by the Métis. Today, if French Canadians in the Red River Valley of Minnesota and North Dakota have mixed with the Germans, Poles, and others, it is important to know that they were preceded here by their French and Indian ancestors, the Métis.

Although the French did not travel within the area of North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota to any degree before the time when LaVerendrye arrived in 1731, the purpose and manner of their explorations, trading, and mixing with Indian populations were well established. In 1534 Jacques Cartier began to trade with Native Americans and explore the North American continent in the interest of France. Jacques Cartier's first contact with Europe's new world lasted only a few years, but his experiences and memoirs accomplished, among other things, two significant points. First, he drew to the attention of French thinkers such as the philospher and essayist Montaigne the matter of the relativity of cultures and; secondly, he pointed out the vast resources to be exploited in North America. Samuel Champlain, seventy years later, set up a model for French survival in the new world. It can be said that his method consisted of a type of two-point plan. First, to locate a new colony which he did by founding the city of

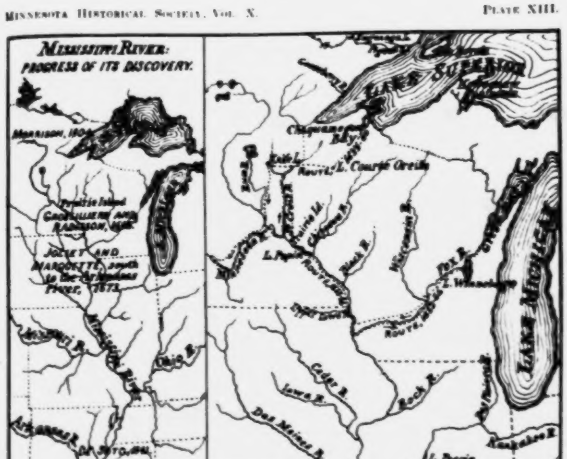


*Samuel de Champlain founded Québec in 1608 and "set up a model for French survival in the New World." (This idealized portrait is from* First Establishment of the Faith in New France, *published in 1878 by Father Christian LeClercq – Minnesota Historical Society).*


La Nouvelle-France
Emplacement des forts (triangles)
et tracé des principales explorations
XVIIe siècle
Champlain 1609
Brûlé 1615
Nicollet 1634
Radisson et DesGroseilliers 1659-1660
La Vérendrye 1731, 1743
other explorations

Québec in 1608; secondly, to strengthen the colony by placing young Frenchmen among Indian tribes. In a matter of a few years some forty Frenchmen were mingling with the Indian peoples from the Ottawa to the Lake Champlain area. Their duties were to learn Indian languages, encourage trade and acquire diplomatic skills (Giraud 1945). By 1666 the civil government of New France had a policy of encouraging marriages between French and Indians in an effort to strengthen the life of the new colony and render Indian populations more open to French trade and traditions (Giraud 1945).

As Champlain's gratification was found in establishing a new colony, others such as Marquette and Jolliet would move westward in order to claim more land for France and more souls for the Catholic Church. In the beginning, however, it was the beaver which beckoned, and it was those "ingratiating rascals," Radisson and Groseilliers, who not only saw the riches of the immense Northwest, but had a viable plan for exploiting them (Gluek 1965). In a preliminary trip to the Lake Superior region, Radisson and Groseilliers gathered an abundance of furs in trade, and deduced that the cheapest and fastest of all routes to the interior region was via Hudson Bay. They were not to be held back, financially speaking, by monopolistic regulations imposed by France, and they shifted allegiance to the English court. The British, whose mercantile system and industrial complex were well developed, signed a contract creating the Hudson Bay Company,

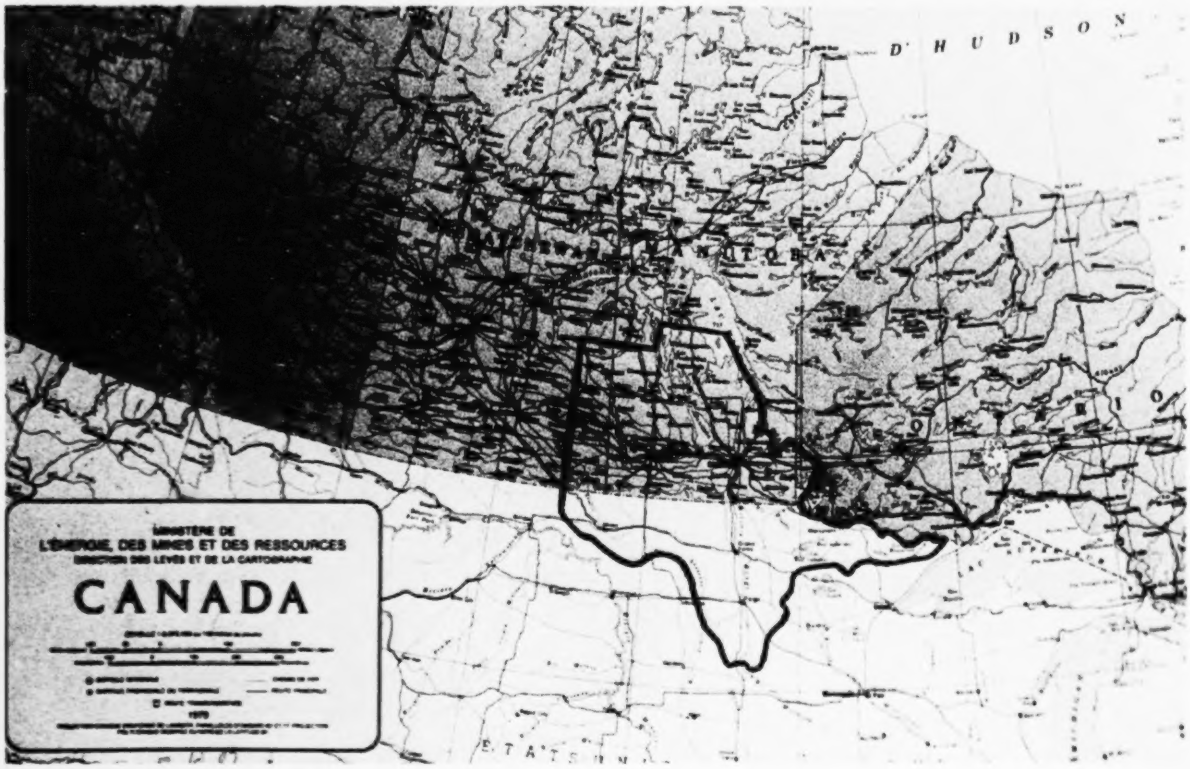

Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. X.
Plate XIII.
Mississippi River:
Progress of its Discovery.
Lake Superior
Chequamegon Bay
L. Courte Oreille
Lake Michigan
Joliet and Marquette, south to the Arkansas River, 1673.
Black R.
Wisconsin R.
Fox R.
L. Winnebago
Cedar R.
Iowa R.
Rock R.
Des Moines R.
Illinois R.
L. Peoria
Kankakee R.
Missouri River
Routes of Groseilliers and Radisson, 1655-56 and 1659-60.
Prairie Island,
ten miles long.
"The First Landing Isle"
visited by Groseilliers and Radisson,
1655-56.
Etter

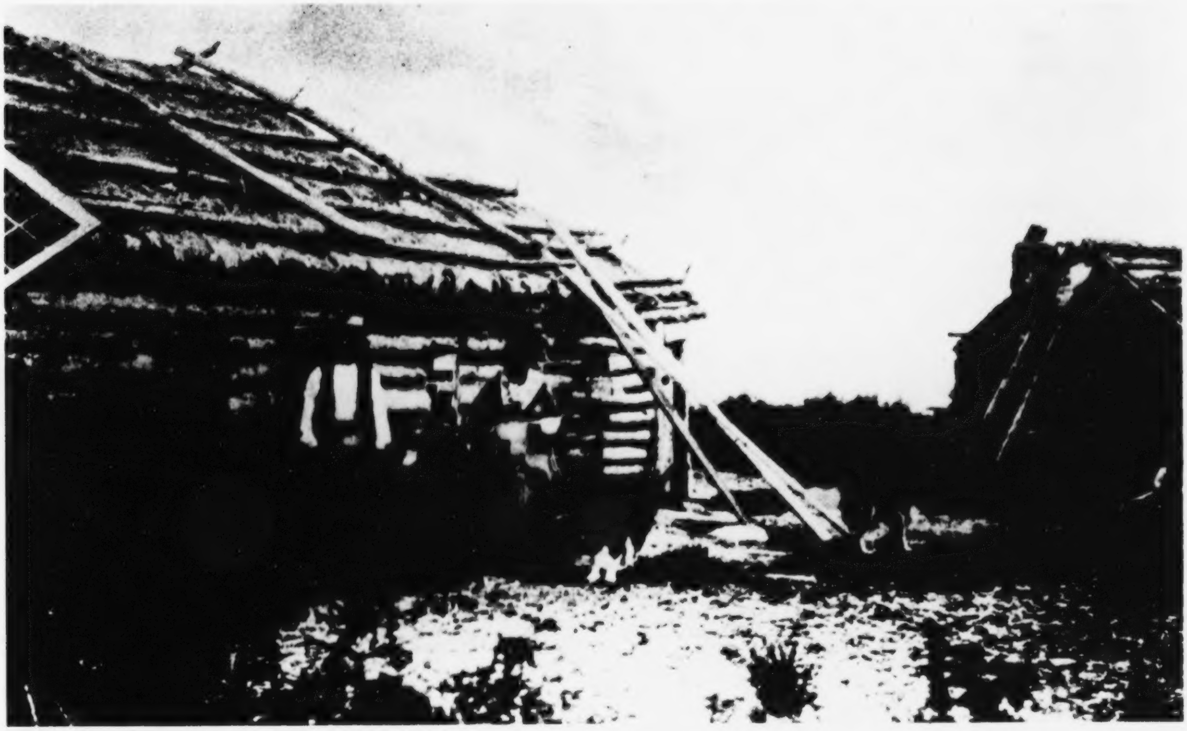
*An early Minnesota Historical Society publication (vol. X) shows the routes of Groseilliers and Radisson, and the progress of discovery of the Mississippi River.*

May 2, 1670 (Gluek 1965). Less than twenty British subjects of the old world were declared new owners of a vast region which they called Rupert's Land. The French refused to recognize the British claims until they were forced to do so by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. The French, however, interpreted the Treaty to mean that England had control of the bayside, while they had access to the interior. In the meanwhile, Du Lhut and De Noyon had explored parts of northern Minnesota by way of the Great Lakes.

By 1713 the international stage was set in the vast northwest. Geographically, the British were established in the north, and the French were to move west along the 49th parallel. When La Verendrye arrived on the scene France's history in North America was two hundred years old, and he inherited the experiences, the policies, the ambitions and motives of both the old and new worlds.

The *ouest* is what the French called the Plains area of northwestern Minnesota, northeastern North Dakota, and Manitoba. It was a vague area, poorly known, but which supposedly led to the Western Sea and a passage to the Orient. Maps of the period identify this region as "pays inconnus" (unknown lands) (Champagne 1968). In twelve years La Verendrye moved New France's exploration, trade and diplomacy from Lake Superior along the 49th parallel to Fort St. Charles on Lake of the Woods, to the confluence of the Assiniboian and Red River at Winnipeg, to the Saskatchewan in the west and to the territory of the Mandan in the Dakotas to the south. As a career man in the civil service of his country, La Verendrye saw his personal gratifications mainly in terms of the military, exploration and trade. He thus used his persistence of character as well as his professional skills and personal and family resources to push for the fulfillment of the national dream of finding a passage to the East. Since the Middle Ages, France had imported precious metals, perls, drogs, spices and tissues from the East. In 1731 American geography seemed to offer the stepping stones by which to reach old trade partners, while at the same time it offered its own riches. The cartography of the period reveals the myth of the mixing of America, Asia, China, Japan and India. The greatest honor La Verendrye could have received would have been to discover for France a passage to the East. But by the 1730s and 40s France's policy of enhancing her national image by successes in the arts and sciences was being cut because of wartime inflation and extended military costs. Moreover, social critics were speaking in favor of a kind of national retrenchment in the name of social justice against the backdrop of over extended political aspirations and unrealistic national goals. In the absence of sufficient financial aid from France, La Verendrye relied on the fur trade and his own family as he persisted in his efforts to explore the West. In the manner of his predecessors,

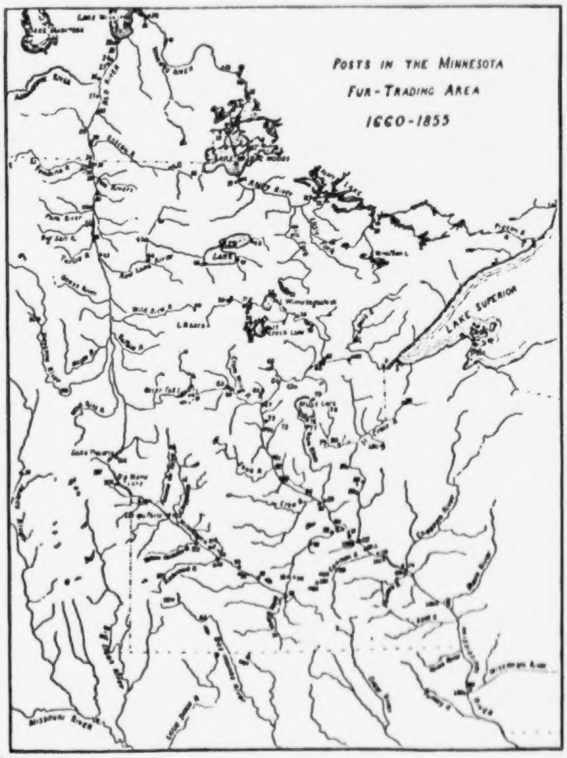

D' H U D S O N
MINISTÈRE DE
L'ÉNERGIE, DES MINES ET DES RESSOURCES
DIRECTION DES LEVÉS ET DE LA CARTOGRAPHIE
CANADA
1970



*A Hudson's Bay Company trading post in 1860, the site not identified (Minnesota Historical Society).*

he established posts as he moved inward. Within the walls of the posts, trade and diplomacy were conducted, while to the surrounding area La Verendrye sent linguists, explorers, and traders to become familiar with the peoples and the geography of the area. In 1735 the youngest of the La Verendrye children was studying mathematics in Québec in order to map parts of the West when he could join his father. In the same year, La Verendrye traded for 35,000 pelts. It was, however, the last of the good years, financially speaking. In 1738 and '39 La Verendrye moved further west to visit the Mandan Indians. The Court of France had allowed this expedition sufficient money for gifts to the Indian people. While on route trade was conducted with Indian tribes who wanted European goods. On October 28, 1738, La Verendrye met the Mandans. After a few days, he left two of his men to learn the languages of the area and returned to Fort La Reine. From the trip into the Dakotas, La Verendrye concluded that there was no river leading to a western sea. In the fall of 1739 he wrote that everyone in his party wished to discover something that would deserve attention (Champagne 1968).

From April, 1742 to July, 1743, a part of the La Verendrye expedition traveled to the west-southwest to South Dakota, and then back to Fort La Reine. The outcome of the trip was that France established ties with several Indian



nations and developed friendships and trade in the French manner of going into the territory (Champagne 1968). In 1744 La Verendrye left the West.

During his lifetime La Verendrye had not gotten the support he would have needed to carry on successful trade and exploration efforts. Exploration was time consuming and expensive. There was no way it could be achieved as a sideline to trade activities. He had, however, freed the future of the obsession of discovering an easy passage to the East, and he had contributed to French experience as well as to diplomatic and trade ties in the immense West.

From 1744 when La Verendrye left the West to 1760 when France was defeated militarily in North America, the French continued to trade in the West but in a less regular and organized manner.

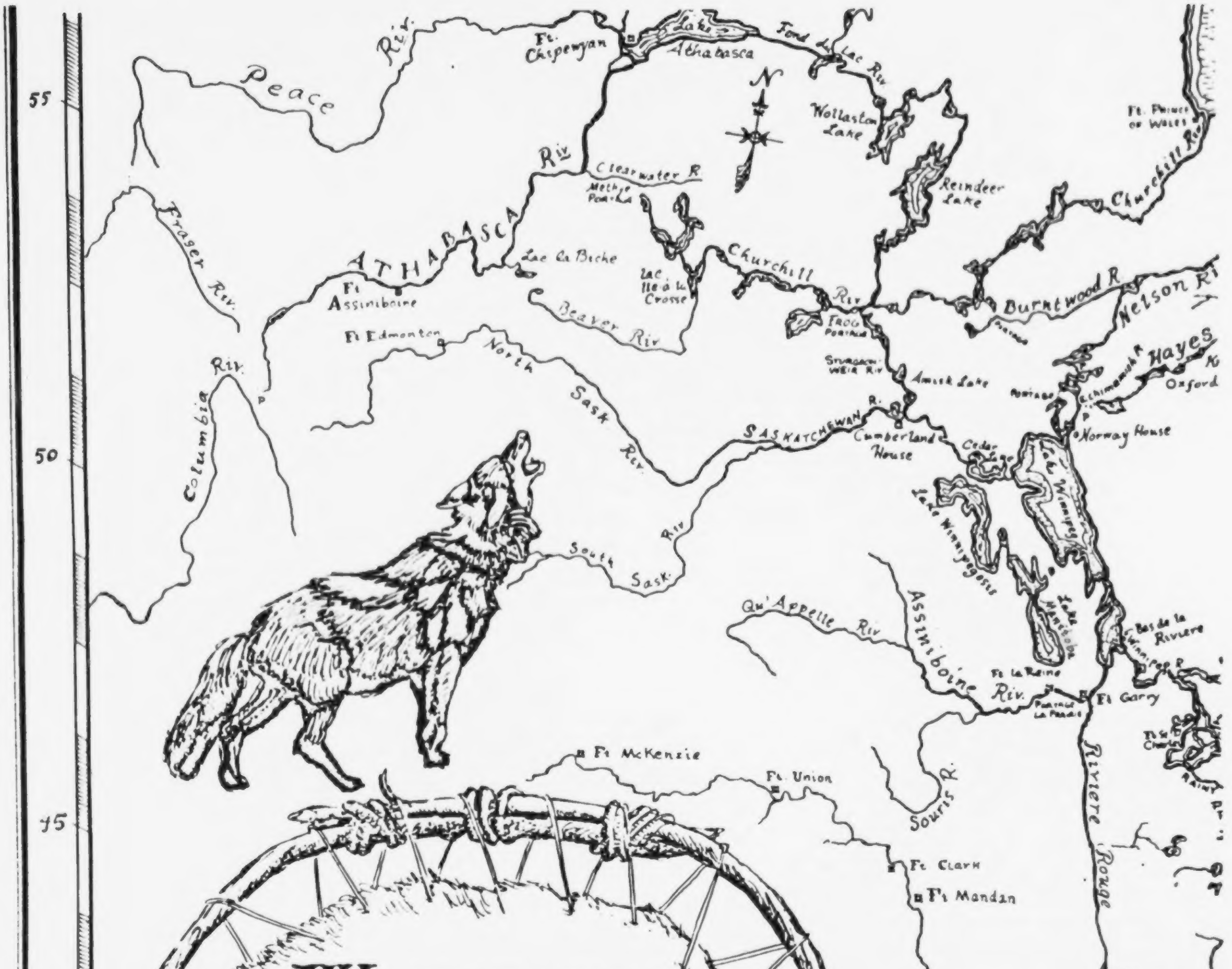
The ink was hardly dry on the 1763 Treaty of Paris which ceded New France to Britain, and the bourgeois French business class had hardly disappeared when English merchants and Scottish bourgeois began arriving in Montréal. This new business class made immediate contact with the French-Canadian working class to pursue the affairs of the fur trade from Montréal to the Northwest.

The Hudson Bay Company continued to function as it had since 1670, but now to the south a loose network of trade began to form. This network was made up of traders, usually Scotch, with capital and financial ties in England and the United States, along with French-Canadian Voyageurs recruited, as in earlier days, along the waterways of the Province of Québec among the farming class. Since early days in Canada young men had supplemented their farming income by trapping, trading, and traveling in the fur industry. The economic realities of the 1760s and 1770s made working out even more of a necessity. The West whose native peoples had been prepared for trade, whose geography was known, and whose resources waited became a map dotted with trails and posts. "In the year 1777, for example, 2,431 voyageurs are recorded in the licenses obtained at Montreal and Detroit. Add to this number the men already in the interior as *hivernants*, the employees of the Hudsons Bay Company, and the traders from the new states on the coast, and five thousand is a conservative estimate of the men who were sprinkled from Montréal to the Rocky Mountains, from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico" (Nute, p. 7, 1955).

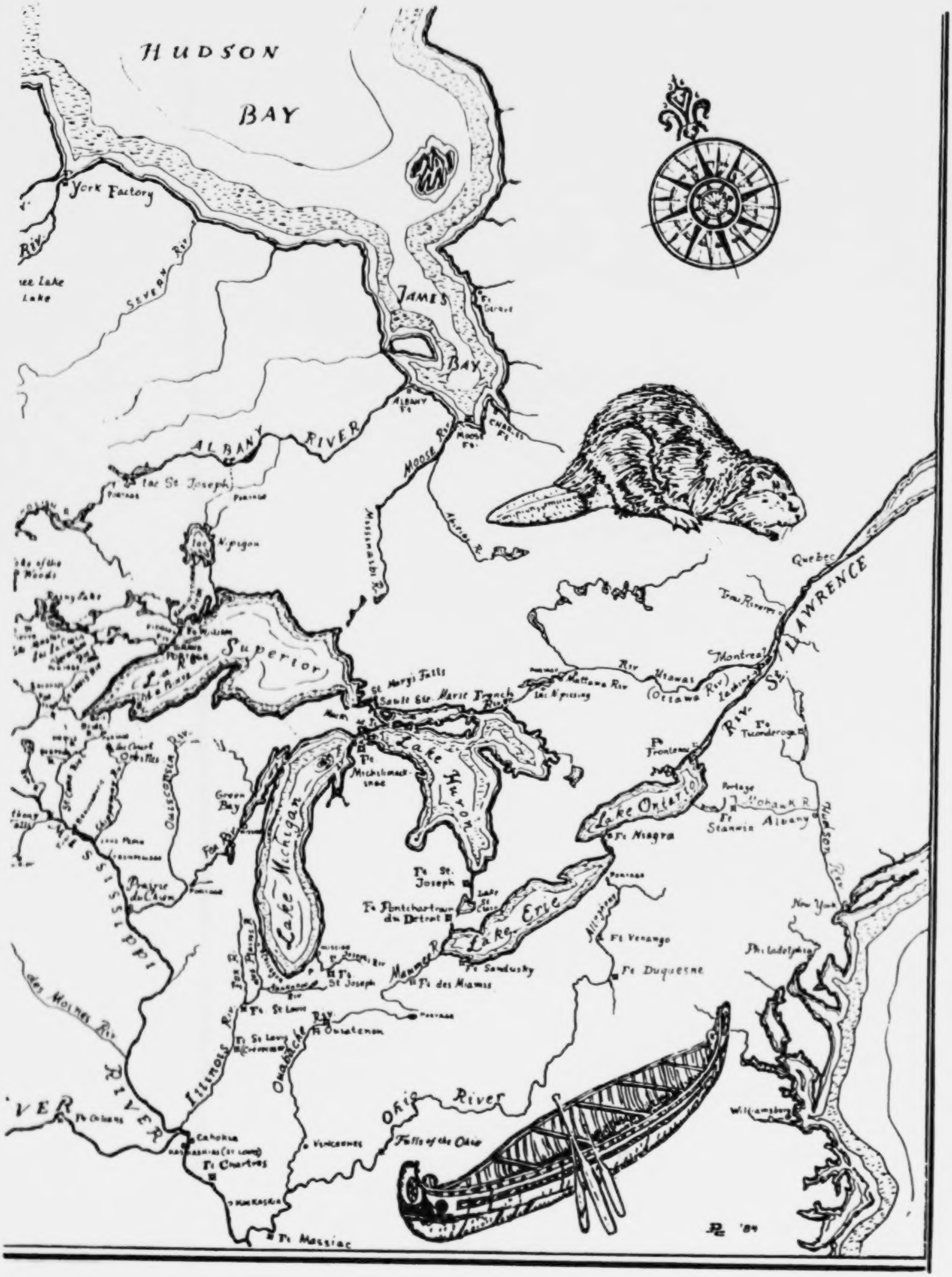
*A Hudson's Bay post in 1880 (Minnesota Historical Society).*

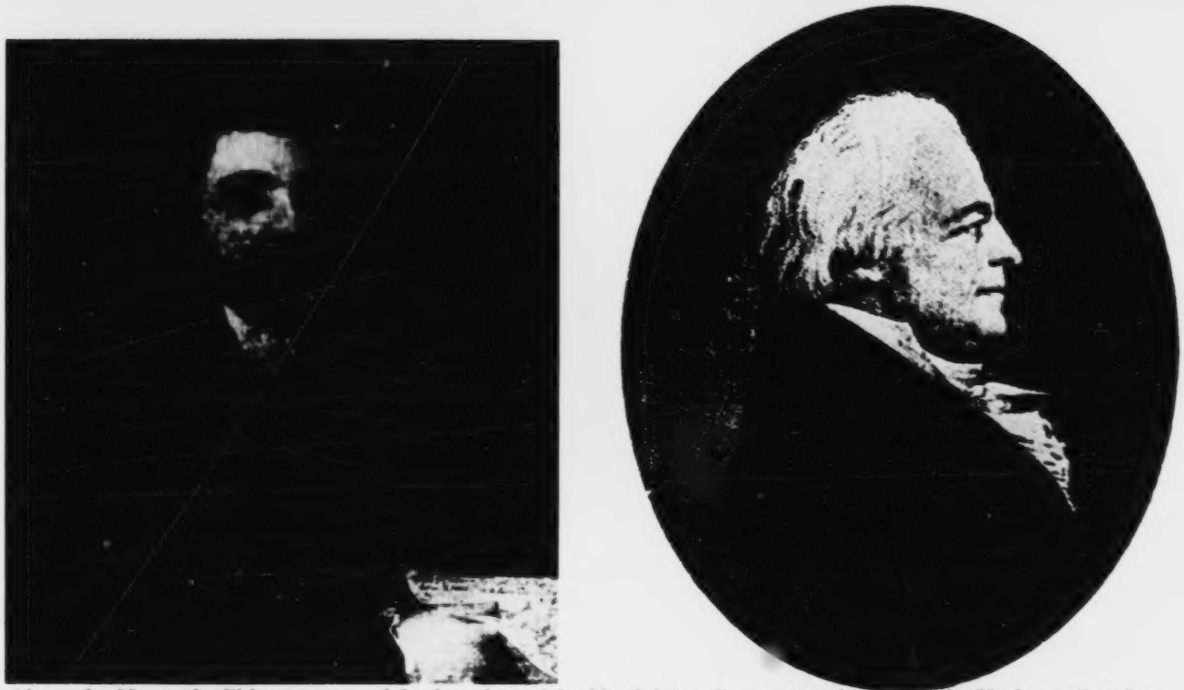
Fur trade development needed willing investors, an industry prepared to furnish supplies, a transportation system, a working class, an indigenous population and a suitable geography. The most suitable areas ". . . were drained by great rivers such as characterize the north temperate climates, and a population with cultural traits peculiar to a hunting economy" (Innis, p. 9, 1956). The Chippewa who had moved west from the Great Lakes area represented a population in Minnesota who were used to the fur trade practices and relied heavily on trade supplies. The French Canadians constituted the work force for the transportation of goods in and out of the West. They were also experienced in initiating and conducting trade, since as early as 1718 individual French traders had lived in the area of northeastern Minnesota. The personal relationships which had been made with the Indians were vital to the trade. Only through direct contact with the Indian people could traders determine the best goods to offer. Both the Hudson Bay and Montréal merchants knew this and relied heavily on French experience (Innis 1956). Arrowheads, axes, blankets, guns, hatchets, kettles, knives, powderhorns, and tabacco were only a few of the items spread forth for trade.

By the 1770s competition was fierce between the Hudson Bay Company and the *Canadiens*, as the Montréal-based group was called. However, the Hudson Bay Company had the advantage of a geographical location which allowed them access to the interior. "Goods


WATERWAYS of the FUR TRADE
Scale in Miles
0
50
100
200
300
55
50
45
40
35
N
Peace Riv.
Ft. Chipewyan
Lake Athabasca
Fond du Lac Riv.
Wollaston Lake
Ft. Prince of Wales
Churchill Riv.
Reindeer Lake
Clearwater R.
Methye Portage
ATHABASCA Riv.
Fraser Riv.
Lac La Biche
Lac Ile à la Crosse
Churchill Riv.
Ft. Assiniboine
Beaver Riv.
Frog Portage
Burntwood R.
Nelson Riv.
Hayes R.
Ft. Edmonton
North Sask. Riv.
Sturgeon Weir Riv.
Amisk Lake
Portage
Echimamish R.
Oxford
Columbia Riv.
SASKATCHEWAN R.
Cumberland House
Cedar Lake
Norway House
Lake Winnipeg
Lake Winnipegosis
South Sask. Riv.
Qu'Appelle Riv.
Assiniboine Riv.
Lake Manitoba
Bas de la Riviere
Winnipeg R.
Ft. La Reine
Ft. Garry
Portage La Prairie
Ft. St. Charles
Rainy
Ft. McKenzie
Ft. Union
Souris R.
Riviere Rouge
Ft. Clark
Ft. Mandan
Lake Traverse
Big Stone L.
Lac qui Parle
St. Peter Riv.
Big Sioux Riv.
Niobrara R.
MISSOURI R.
Platte Riv.
Bellevue
Kansas R.

From Wheeler, A Toast to the Fur Trade


HUDSON
BAY
York Factory
Riv
Severn Riv
JAMES
BAY
Ft Albany
Moose Fo.
Charles Ft
Ft Geroet
ALBANY RIVER
Moose Riv
lac St. Joseph
Portage
Portage
lac Nipigon
Missinaibi R.
Abitibi R.
Rainy Lake
Ft Nipigon
La Pointe
Superior
St Marys Falls
Sault Ste. Marie
French River
Mattawa Riv
lac Nipissing
Riv
Utawas
(Ottawa Riv)
Montreal
Lachine
Trois Rivieres
Quebec
LAWRENCE
St
Riv
Ft Ticonderoga
Ft Frontenac
Lake Huron
Ft Michilimackinac
Green Bay
Fox Riv
Ouisconsin Riv
Portage
Prairie du Chien
Lake Michigan
Ft St. Joseph
Lake St Clair
Ft Pontchartrain du Detroit
Lake Erie
Lake Ontario
Ft Niagra
Portage
Mohawk R.
Ft Stanwix
Albany
Hudson Riv
New York
Philadelphia
Williamsburg
Allegheny
Ft Venango
Ft Duquesne
Maumee R.
Ft Sandusky
Ft des Miamis
mission
St Joseph Riv
Ft St Joseph
Fox R
des Plaines
Ft St Louis
Ft St Louis
Illinois Riv
Ouabache
Ft Ouiatenon
Portage
des Moines Riv
MISSISSIPPI
RIVER
VER
Ft Orleans
Cahokia
Kaskaskia (St Louis)
Ft Chartres
Vincennes
Ohio River
Falls of the Ohio
Ft Massiac
RC '84



*Alexander Henry the Elder was one of the founders of the North West Company, which gave the Hudson's Bay Company serious competition in the fur trade around 1800. Both he and his nephew, Alexander Henry the Younger, kept journals of their trading on the Red, Pembina and Saskatchewan Rivers – which provide much information about early fur trading activity in the Canadian-American border region (Minnesota Historical Society: the portrait of the elder Henry is from* Two Western Adventurers *by Lawrence Burfee; the portrait of his nephew is copied from an oil painting in the estate of Norman Kittson, Junior).*

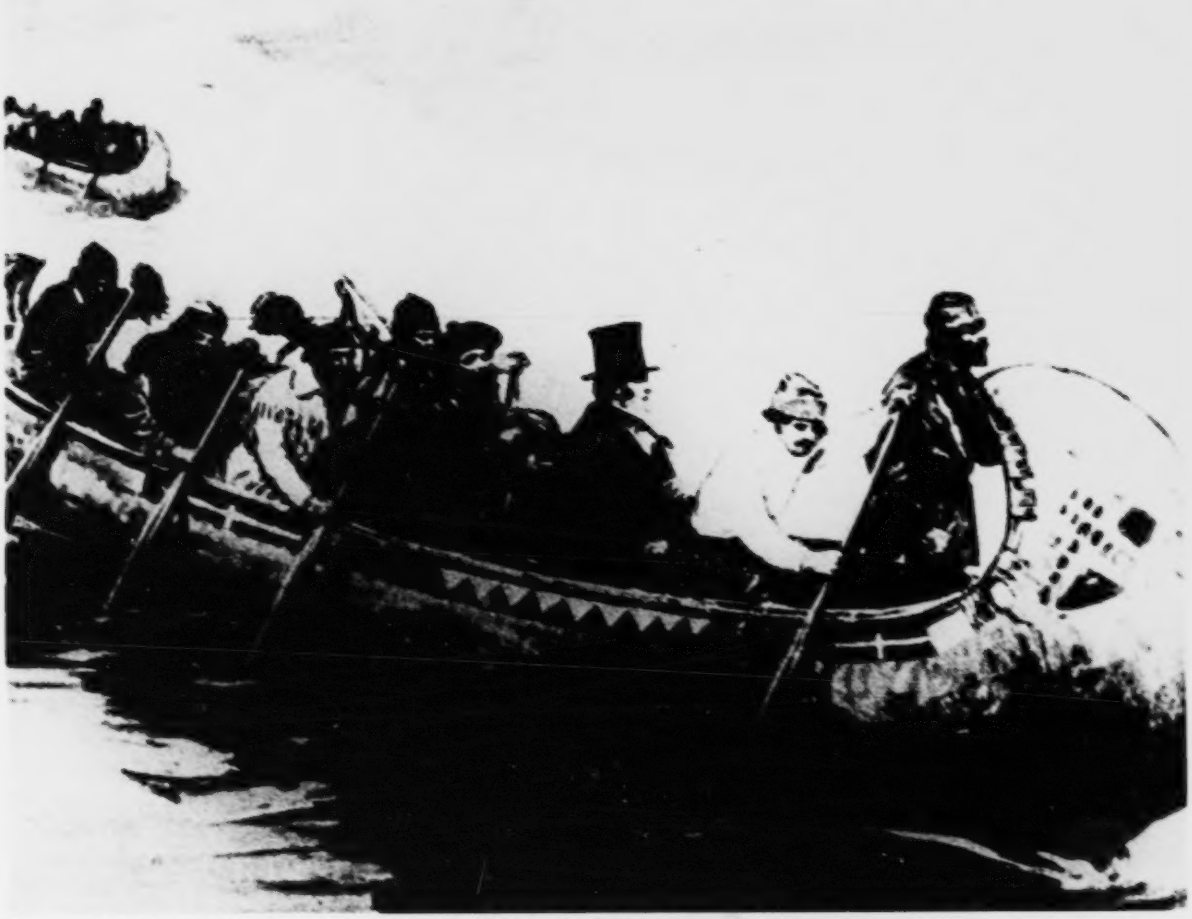
arrived at the Assiniboia River a month sooner than via Grand Portage" (Innis, p. 158, 1956). In fact, according to the historian Innis, "The conquest of New France was largely the result of the efficiency of English manufacturers combined with the control of shorter routes to the interior from New York to Hudson Bay" (Innis, p. 166, 1956).

It was the cheap, well-qualified work force known as the voyageurs, and the English capital offered by such men as Alexander Henry which made the Canadian fur trade financially viable, and eventually, its members were grouped together under the title of the Northwest Fur Company. By the 1800s many Canadians and Métis, whose Indian mothers had married Canadians, were strongly identifying with the fur trade, the hunting attached to it and the country itself. They called themselves *Gens du pays*, people of this land.

From the early 1700s to the early 1800s the mixing of the French voyageurs and the Chippewa and Cree who depended on the fur trade in the West increased dramatically. By the 1780s their situations were in many ways similar. First, they both lived in the same geographical conditions which dictated habits and formed character. Secondly, the French had mixed with the Indians since the days of Champlain, and, when after 1763 aspiring to bourgeois class status with its often accompanying cultural prejudices was virtually eliminated from among the French-Canadian working class, mingling was even more inevitable and natural. Moreover, the prejudices often expressed by so-called sedentary people toward nomadic populations were not strong among the voyageurs who remained in the interior.

As the fur trade evolved in the West, the expectations of the French and Indians merged as did their psychologies and ways of life. After the conquest of New France in 1760, most French in the fur trade received the jobs of ". . . the transportation and the lower range of services in the new British enterprises" (Golden, p. 4, 1924). The class of men known as the voyageurs who signed a contract with the fur companies to transport merchandise and furs has been interpreted in basically two ways by historians. There are those who tell of the voyageur's legendary hardiness and experience, his unquestioning obedience to his superiors and his libertine attitude as noted in his songs, tales, and public conduct. Some historians have looked beyond the stereotype facade of harmony and legendary gaiety into the actual experience and living conditions of the voyageur class. They have found that the voyageurs were taken advantage of in many ways. Their food rations most generally consisted of one bushel of mashed corn and two pounds of fat pork per month when on the lake routes from Montréal to Grand Portage (Golden 1924). They received little money and were often paid in goods. Many became indebted to the company (Innis 1956). *"En 1791 il y avait neuf cents des employés de la compagnie qui lui devaient plus que le produit de dix à quinze années de leurs gages à venir"* (La Rochefoucault-Liancourt, Vol. II, p. 225 in Giraud 1945). The employers of the fur companies manipulated the voyageurs as well as the employees of the posts, paying them nearly nothing while saying the men worked for the love of being in the country. When Governor Simpson of the Hudson Bay Company wrote to Duncan Finlayson at the Peace River district in 1830, he revealed a great deal about how French Canadians in the fur trade were perceived. He wrote, "You will bear in mind that it is Canadians you have now to deal with . . . If humoured in trifles, anything may be done with them, but if treated with uniform harshness and severity, they will mutiny to a certainty. Your fort hunter (Baptiste Bisson) is the best without exception in the North. His temper is capricious. You should therefore study to please him . . ." (Giraud, p. 341, 1945). Again we read, "Canadians would be, if well managed, the best and cheapest men . . ." (Giraud, p. 340, 1945).

Because of the socio-economic status and working conditions of most French Canadians in the fur trade, one can assume that the majority would not have given themselves seriously to the job for any period of time longer than necessary without some personal gratification. It was common knowledge that these men did not take severe orders well nor accept many long-term contracts (Giraud 1945). In the eyes of some Anglo-Saxons, French Canadians in the fur trade were often obedient but not faithful because they held something in reserve. Much of what is identifed as individualism in the French-Canadian character was a response to being "managed" as well as the fact that very few of them became true partners in the business. Jean-Baptiste Cadotte whose son would establish forts in Minnesota from Red Lake to Red Lake Falls in the late 1790s was an exception. Cadotte's ancestor had allied himself through marriage as early as 1671 with the



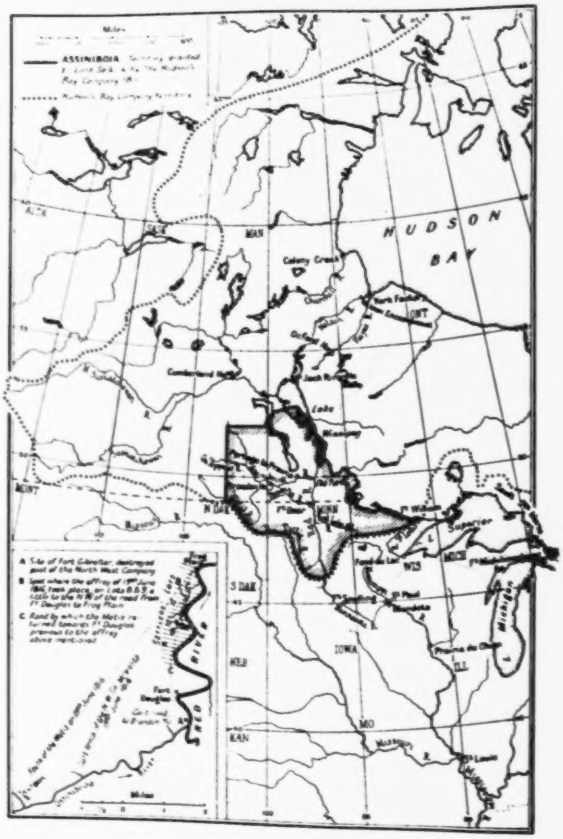
*Governor Sir George Simpson was accompanied by his piper when he made a tour of inspection of Hudson's Bay Company posts and forts (Minnesota Historical Society: from a painting by Charles Cuneo).*

Chippewa, thus by 1760 his Métis descendents who carried the name of Cadotte were perfect contacts for Alexander Henry who wanted to invest in the fur trade. The Cadottes, however, were few and far between. Most French Canadians were common laborers in the fur business after 1760.

For the majority of French Canadians in the fur trade, reward was not to be obtained by socio-economic status, but rather in a geocultural mobility. From voyageur a man passed frequently to the job of *hivernant*, that is, one who wintered in the interior. From that job he often became an *homme libre*, or, free man. An *homme libre* was one who had finished his contract with the fur company and was free to hunt and trade independently. Because of its desire to control trade, the Hudson Bay Company had always been careful about what men were to do once their contracts were up. They preferred that they return to England, alone, in order to create as little a burden as possible to the Company's retirement plan and be of no threat to its policy of monopolizing all trade. However, the more loosely structured Northwest Fur Company encouraged men in the Red River Valley to go into the country, marry, and trade in basically two ways. First, to bring in furs; and secondly, to hunt the buffalo and produce the pemmican essential to the Company food supply.

By the late 1790s fur trade was generating an unbelievable amount of business along and on either side of the Red River. The large number of men involved in the trade caused a food supply industry to develop on the plains from the Red River west where roamed thousands of buffalo. A dozen or more fur trading posts were established along the Red River and its tributaries, and their employees traded in furs and pemmican. Some forts consumed as much as 450 pounds of buffalo meat daily (Innis 1956).

Furs were not as abundant on the plains as to the east and north of the Red River Valley. Thus, the Métis, who came to inhabit the area along the Red River served both the food and fur industries. Twice a year, in summer and fall, they went on the hunt and made pemmican. The rest of the year they trapped, and cultivated in a limited manner. It is difficult to determine how many Franco-Indian descendants were living in the Red River Valley by 1820. Certainly Frenchmen and Indian women had married *à la façon du pays*, according to the manner of the country, soon after 1610. Gradually such unions multiplied along the fur trade routes, but it was in the Red River Valley and the surrounding area where the highest concentration of marriages occurred between French and Indian and their Métis offspring. A census of the Northwest Company's employees in the year 1815 counted 1,610 white men with 405 Indian wives and 600 mixed-blood children (Alexander Henry, the Younger 1815). These figures for the region would be much higher were the number of Hudson Bay employees added. While the frontier in the Northwest "lingered" from the 1780s to the 1860s the Métis developed a strong geocultural identity.



*The extent of "Assiniboia," the territory granted to Lord Selkirk by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1811 is shown on this map published in John P. Pritchett's* The Red River Valley, 1811-1849 *(Minnesota Historical Society).*

To understand the geocultural history of the Métis we must remind ourselves of the similarity of the Chippewa, Cree, and French-Canadian living conditions, mentality, social roles, work, and economy in the West. Historians who have studied French-Canadian and Indian relations cite the following reasons for the intermingling which occurred: desire to move within the country, necessity of working in the fur trade, adaptation to the forest and waterways and the living conditions of the interior, desire for adventure, and a so-called ungovernable spirit (Giraud 1945; Morrissonneau 1983). Hunting, fishing, and trading were part of both economies as were the habits of a life-style based on seasonal work patterns. In all ways, the French Canadians and Indians influenced one another on the frontier. Indian and French-Canadian legends fused. A new, distinct language called Mitchif evolved in which Cree and French functioned as partners. Words of French songs were sung to Indian melodies, the fiddle became a popular instrument, the Métis Red River jig the regional dance, while clothes cut in the French-Canadian tradition were decorated with Chippewa floral patterns, all held to the body by the famous hand-woven arrowhead sash.

*Two fur traders, c. 1880 (Minnesota Historical Society).*

The political character of the nineteenth century Red River Valley was shaped by at least four well known events. They were: 1. the creation of the Red River Settlement in 1812; 2. the establishment of the Canadian-United States boundary in 1818; 3. the Sayer trial of 1849 whereby the Métis as a people successfully opposed the Hudson Bay Company's monopoly policy over trade; and, 4. the decision of Ottawa during the late 1860s to purchase the Hudson Bay Territory and create the fifth Canadian Province in 1870.

The nineteenth century witnessed dramatic additions to the class structure of the Red River area. In 1812 when the Selkirk Colony was established at present-day Winnipeg, it represented the first significant settlement effort of a European nature in the vast Northwest. Only a few French families settled in Red River when it was first founded. The "new" French-Canadian influence came in 1818 when Provencher arrived as Bishop, and Dumoulin as the new Catholic diocese's first missionary. Until 1853 Bishop Provencher symbolized Catholic sedentary life in the West. He managed the affairs of the diocese, the clergy, the Cathedral, and the schools. Selkirk, himself, helped establish the Catholic Church which he saw as a force for stability. The first group of missionaries to serve the new diocese were from the Québec farming class. They were not numerous and they shifted around from the plains to Saint-Boniface. Sévère Dumoulin was twenty-five when he arrived in Pembina. He, like other missionaries built a small chapel and tried to create a center of civilizing influence in the French-Catholic tradition of Québec, which meant that the priest was the leader of a limited group which was to evolve as part of a larger society. Young missionary priests from Québec did not seek to acquire social standing among the new English class of Red River whose institutions and bourgeois class were under the influence of the Church of England and the Hudson Bay Company. One Red River historian wrote, "The French-Canadian priest did not see himself as a scion of a great empire and rarely possessed the racial assurance common of his anglican counterpart. And he, as a cleric of the French-Canadian Church of Rome, had long ago come to terms with the river lot, the bush, and the mixed-blood marriage, and hardly found them or the fur trade, the hunt, and the fisheries alien" (Pannekoek, pp. 39-40, 1973). In fact, the French-Canadian clergy and the leaders of the Métis such as the Gringras, Grants, Nolins and others relied heavily on each other, and they all mixed among the general Métis class.

In 1844, the Grey Nuns arrived from Québec to educate youngsters and care for the sick. The Grey Nuns quickly became familiar with Indian and Métis ways. Their records show that they were not only quick to establish schools, but their contact with the people was close, for between the years of 1844 and 1855 they made some 10,000 house calls. They themselves were influenced by the Indian and Métis peoples, especially in their healing practices (De Moissac 1945). In their schools they taught reading, writing, mathematics, grammar, history, Christian doctrine and ethics, family etiquette, and tried to inspire *sentiments nobles* in the Indian and Métis pupils towards those who were helping them (De Moissac 1945).

In 1845, the number of missionary priests in the area went from four to thirty when the Oblats arrived from France. Within the French-Canadian society of Red River the Oblats were a distinct group. They did not go on the hunt with the Métis and, in general, were more distant toward the French Canadians (Pannekoek 1973). Their position was that they were concerned with the propagation of the faith, not with matters of any internal political nature. Their stance was based on recent events, for in the 1830s and '40s the French-Canadian clergy was indeed identifying strongly with the Métis. In 1838, Father Belcourt had supported the Métis free traders against the Hudson Bay Company, and for his action was forced momentarily to leave the West. But by 1845 he returned via the diocese of Dubuque. Within two years, three hundred Métis had gathered around his mission and Norman Kittson's trading post at Pembina. Yet, it is significant to note that in drafting a petition to the Queen of England in protest of the Hudson Bay Company monopoly, Belcourt argued politically as a Métis and, as a British subject while living in U.S. territory. The petition read, *"Nous sommes près de la ligne territoriale, nous pourrions, nous admirons la sagesse de la Constitution Britannique, et nous en désirons les priviléges"* (Golden 1924). Belcourt's life and work with the Métis reflect his deep appreciation of their culture and his own commitment to the establishment of a French-Canadian Catholic Church in the Red River Valley. His work on a French and Saulteux dictionary as well as his description of the hunt of 1845 are only two examples of his appreciation and respect of the Métis culture and civilization.

On January 8, 1814, Miles Macdonell, as first governor of Red River, had proclaimed that no flesh, fish, or vegetable was to be taken from Assiniboia territory without a license from the governor (MacEwan 1981). Furthermore, the Métis practice of pursuing the buffalo with horses was declared illegal. The Métis who depended on pemmican sales to the Northwest Fur Company took no small offense from the stance of the newcomers. And, the Northwest Fur Company being threatened by the proclamation, encouraged general resistance. The matter culminated in the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks when Métis and settlers of Red River met in armed resistance. The result of the conflict signaled the rise of a consciousness among the Métis of new political realities surrounding the issues of free trade rights and recently drawn national borders.

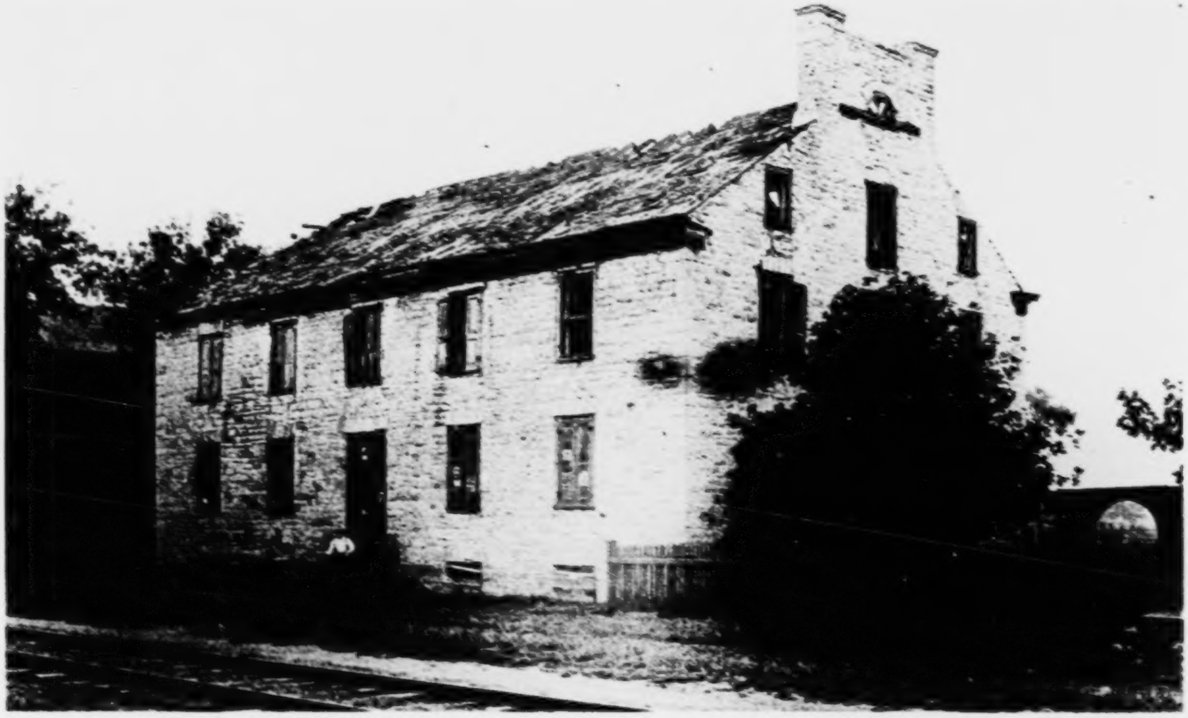
Official fur company and national policies regarding the Métis practice of hunting in a north-south direction beyond the 49th parallel and into the territory of competing fur companies were often contradictory. In 1846, Governor Simpson was quick to recognize the Métis as the people belonging to a traditionally defined country: *Gens libres* (Free people) and *"Gens du pays"* (people of this land). When in response to the U.S. government's accusation that profits were being made from furs collected on U.S. soil, Simpson counselled his men by saying, "We run no wish thereby [with the Métis] of drawing the Honorable Company into explanations with governments on the delicate subject of territorial right, as they cannot identify us with these people who may either be Americans or British subjects as suits their purpose being natives of the soil . . ." (St-Onge, p. 8, 1983 from Simpson 1846:70). By the 1850s even government reports to Ottawa stated that the natural affinities of Red River lay with the Valley of the Missouri, not with eastern Canada. Add to this the attraction which St. Paul began to offer along with social upheaval in the Red River Colony and the British Northwest seemed to some nearly out of control.

Not only did a commercial trade war develop by the 1840s in the area along the Red River, but the Colony itself was thrown wide open. Perhaps the greatest social phenomenon in the Northwest occurred at Red River in the 1830s when the shift was made from native to European wives among most of the fur trade elite (Pannekoek 1973). As native women were cast aside in favor of newly arrived Canadian or European women, open social war broke out at Red River among the elite along the lines of race, religion, and social standing (Van Kirk 1980). Native, country born, and Métis wives of the Colony were now being "weaned" of their cultural ties in an open and deliberate manner, while newly arrived Canadian and European women were "protected" from participating in trade (Van Kirk 1983). As the new Colony strived to emulate distant social codes, formal barriers were established between new immigrants, Métis, and the native peoples. It is in this period of social turmoil that one finds the roots of prejudices favoring a system of sociocultural institutions and values of a European nature as opposed to the customs and traditions of Indian and Métis life along the Red River.

Language played an important role in the struggle which developed, for in common everyday speech few people recognized that in fact a word like "civilization" could be an instrument of discrimination. The word which had acquired eighteen hundred years of history had become for many Europeans an international code for measuring governments, organizations, and societies. Thus, in Red River peoples of various histories were aligned socially by their use of such words as *sauvage*. *Sauvage* means in French "wood dweller." That in itself is not pejorative but it had long come to mean "one who was not part of an established human order" (Morissonneau in Louder and Waddell 1983). In the new social order at Red River, "civilize" meant for many to become like English upper class, or, to some to acquire the values of French-Canadian sedentary life. Many officials of Indian nations were not greatly respected because they did not represent social organizations in the British or French-Canadian traditions. The new social code and general perception of others was apparent in every aspect of intercultural relations, and played no small part in forming political disposition. As demographical makeup changed new geopolitical realities superseded traditional cultural patterns, and by the 1860s the Métis were facing the threat of becoming marginal in an era dominated by political decisions.

Traditionally in the Red River area, the Métis moved collectively in such a way as to participate in four annual geocultural activities: 1. they trapped and traded in the wooded areas and along waterways; 2. they wintered in communities along the Red River and to the west-northwest in North Dakota and to the west-northwest of Winnipeg; 3. they hunted the buffalo on the prairies, and 4. they cultivated small plots in a subsistance-like fashion in the village-like centers. Their manner of living depended on their cultural habits, social preferences, and geographical location. The Red River Settlement at Winnipeg had signaled change. It was the newcomers to St. Paul, Minnesota, in the 1840s who introduced the Métis and the Red River settlers to a second wave of the new economic and political strategies. At first, the newcomers seemed mainly bent on economic ventures, but by 1869 the freshly organized State of Minnesota, Rupert's Land and the territory of North Dakota were locked into a political framework of interracial and international dimensions.

The Assiniboia Grant of 1811 had traced out a territory deep into Minnesota and North Dakota along geocultural lines. In order to obtain the concession from the Hudson Bay Company, Selkirk had argued that it was more "natural" for the future colony to extend south from Red River than to the east (Gilman 1979).



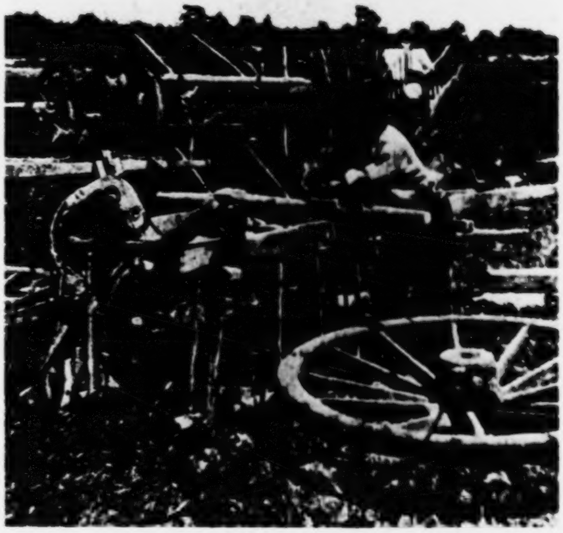
***Before the founding of Fort Snelling and the settlement of St. Paul, settlers of the Selkirk Colony ventured as far south as Prairie du Chien on the Mississippi River, seeking necessary seed and necessities from the outside world. American fur traders worked out of this settlement, protected by Fort Crawford, which was established in 1816. This 1900 photo shows the ruins of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company warehouse at Prairie du Chien (Minnesota Historical Society).***

Nature itself, so it was stated, leaned in favor of north-south relations. And experience was perhaps quick to prove the point, for in 1821 the Northwest Fur Company merged with the Hudson Bay Company, in large part, because of its high transportation costs from its headquarters to the east in Montreal (Innis 1956). But, also to the south, new trade partners had quickly emerged. In 1820, the depressed Red River Colony sent an envoy to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, to buy supplies from such merchants as Joseph Rolette. Since the 1780s, Prairie du Chien had developed as headquarters for independent traders in the West. By 1800 men such as Robert Dickson had worked out a deal with Selkirk of Red River and Joseph Renville of the Big Stone Lake area to trade in the Mississippi Valley (Gilman 1979). Other trading partnerships arose around Lake Traverse with Métis and Red River traders. The Columbia Fur Company with Renville, Laidlaw, McKenzie and Dickson as partners was anchored at Lake Traverse and traded as far west as the Mandan country.

Since 1818 when the Canadian and United States border had been established in the Northwest, the U.S. government had kept a watchful eye on trade by Canadians south of the 49th parallel. Fort Snelling was built in 1819, and in 1823 Major Long came to the Pembina area. Movement between trading partners was, therefore, soon matched by political decisions and military traffic.

The most significant international trade development in the Northwest occurred in 1844 when Norman Kittson set up a supply post at Pembina. He had discussed the plan with Sinclair and McDermot, two men in charge of hauling freight for the Hudson Bay Company. Their encouraging tone meant that there was a possiblity of free trade with the Red River Colony and the Métis. The Colony would purchase imports from Pembina, and the Métis would supply furs, pemmican, and other goods to St. Paul. This example of U.S. trade expansion so threatened the Hudson Bay Company that in 1846 British soldiers arrived at Red River to put a stop to so-called contraband activities associated with the free trade to the south. But in the end, the Company was unable to enforce its monopolistic policy, and by 1849 the word went out that trade was open and free. *"Le commerce est libre"* was on the tongue of every Métis free trader. In 1858 when Minnesota became a state it looked to Red River as a commercial dream (Gluek 1965). Indian garments worked with beads and porcupine quills went south along with pemmican and furs. To the north came general merchandise, staple groceries, tobacco, liquor, dry goods,

The best known Métis who became financial partners in the Red River trade business were the Gingras and the Rolettes. The Gingras worked in North Dakota and around Red River, while Joe Rolette, Jr., of Prairie du Chien worked in the Pembina and St. Joseph area of North Dakota. The Métis supplemented their income by working along the trails in much the same way as the voyageurs had done earlier along the waterways. The topographical French names in North Dakota and Minnesota attest to the active presence of the Métis. Côteaux, Traverse, Grande côté, bois francs, Belle Prairie, les fourches, and terre tremblante are a few. clothing, tools, hardware, guns, ammunition, and farm implements. "From 1855 and 1863 alone, the carts brought $1,466,766 worth of furs and robes into St. Paul, which accounted for four-fifths of the fur business handled there (Gilman, p. 87, 1979). Métis families provided the labor force for the transportation of the goods along trails extending from Winnipeg to St. Paul, and branching out to the east and west. They used the Red River cart which was as well adapted to the terrain of the area as the canoe was to the lakes and streams. According to the season and the destiny, the Métis caravans traveled the prairie, the woods, and the "middle" trails in Manitoba, Minnesota, and North Dakota (Gilman 1979).



*As the French voyageurs in their canoes had provided transportation earlier in the fur trade, the mixed blood métis of the American-Canadian border country built and operated the two-wheeled oxcarts which traveled between the settlements around Fort Garry (later Winnipeg) and St. Paul – the head of navigation on the Mississippi River. This photograph is labeled "Preparing a Red River cart train at Pembina for a trip to St. Anthony Falls" (Minnesota Historical Society).*

The ox carts traveled in long trains between Fort Garry and St. Paul because of the danger of attack from Sioux Indian bands (Minnesota Historical Society: a photograph by Whithey's Gallery of St. Paul).

The Red River and St. Paul trade represented for the Métis the last phase of their semi-nomadic existence, for the trade itself was between two growing settlements; while the Métis were preparing a smaller and smaller percentage of the goods which they only transported. In general, the fur trade was being phased out in favor of industrialized agriculture. It was, moreover, common knowledge that the fur traders would serve as intermediaries between the tribes and the treaty commissioners (Gluek 1965). In the 1860s not only did Minnesotans acquire great tracts of land from the Native Americans, but they also attempted to purchase Rupert's Land for 8 million dollars in 1869 (Gluek 1965). In that same year there was an active American political party at Red River. But just as Americans rushed to Americanize the Northwest, so did Canadians press for a Canada from Sea to Shining Sea. The British North America Act of 1867 had prepared the way by allowing for Canada to annex Rupert's Land as a fifth province. Some surveying began in 1869 near Red River and William McDougall was appointed first governor. The Métis, who felt the people of Red River had not been consulted, organized to stop the annexation process. On October 18, 1869, a National Committee of Métis was set up and on December 8 Louis Riel published the "Declaration of the People of Rupert's Land and the Northwest." It was the newly organized Red River government which was to negotiate with Canada. In the meanwhile, hoping to acquire Red River, Minnesotans preached the doctrine of nature and manifest destiny and tried to persuade Riel in favor of annexation to the United States.

The Catholic Church sympathized with the Métis in nearly every way; while the authorities of Red River told London they needed assistance against both the Métis and the Americans. In the end, the rights regarding language, religion, and schools which were

A pre-Civil War photograph shows Red River carts and a driver on Third Street in St. Paul (Minnesota Historical Society: photo from Martin's Art Gallery in St. Paul).

*This photograph of Louis Riel surrounded by his followers/supporters, is dated 1869, when the métis occupied Fort Garry and Riel proposed the formation of a provisional government to replace the control of the Hudson's Bay Company (Minnesota Historical Society).*

offered moved the Métis and French Canadians to accept the creation of Manitoba as a province in 1870.

In an effort to maintain their traditional way of life, many Métis moved west to Saskatchewan with such leaders as Louis Riel. After 1885 when Riel was executed for leading forces of resistance against the Canadian government, many of his followers returned to Manitoba and North Dakota, especially to the Turtle Mountain area.

In brief, a host of complex social and political forces challenged traditional Métis life. National, provincial, territorial, and state boundaries created from 1818 to 1870 were of no small impact on a people whose collective identity was so attached to the geography of the area that they seemed blind to the new political forces of economic and social change. In the end, the reorganization of their traditional territory left the Métis with no land, no citizenship, and no economic structure. Since they had inhabited a land which two expanding super powers divided, they not only lost their collective way of life, but were granted virtually no political power as a group by the new nation builders. They were politically alienated and socially confined by people whose notions of nationhood were dictated by a nineteenth-century mythical concept of unified nations. Yet, it was to be during the adolescence of the Northwest's nationhood that the Métis would forge a new consciousness for themselves. The survival of their traditions in the twentieth century has been and remains a testimony to their collective strength and human flexibility more than a tribute to a mythical perception of modern nations united under one social doctrine and unified by one common history.

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# The Michif Language

by John Crawford

Contact between speakers of French and speakers of Plains Cree produced a linguistic development that is likely unique in its nature among the languages of the world because it is a true mixture of languages. The core of this development is that the noun phrase is basically French – there are practically no Cree noun roots, and articles and possessive particles are also French. The gender system of French is maintained, as is also the French sound system. The area of verb structure is Cree and shows the complicated word structure of that language in both inflectional and derivational affixes. Numbers, except the number one, are French; color terms are French. Examples follow:[1]

Mischet lee zaif dayawn avik dee lawr selee. "I have lots of eggs with salt pork."

Aiꞥ om keeyayow kayawsh, see zhvoo ewanihawt. "There was a man long ago who lost his horses."

Teekwawm ekwayshkeetawpit aiꞥ shyaiꞥ nwer wawpamayw akoutit la wawgin epimbastayyit. "When he looked again, he saw a black dog running alongside the wagon."

The use of French adjectives is common, see *aiꞥ shyaiꞥ nwer* "a black dog" in the previous example, although many adjectival notions are also expressed in Cree verb forms. Thus alongside *zhi fetchkee* "I am tired" we also find *diyeshkoushin* with the same meaning. Many syntactic particles also occur in forms from either language. Some say *mawshkout* "perhaps," others *tet baiꞥ, meena* or *aiꞥ outri fway* for "again," *aiꞥ pchi braiꞥ* or *apishish* for "a little bit." French prepositional phrases are common, and some Cree relating particles of similar function (postposed) also occur, like *ouschi* "out of."

There are also a fairly large number of fixed expressions and frequently occurring patterns that are likely to be French for some speakers at least. Alongside the clearly Cree *Tawnshi eshinihkawshouyen?* "What's your name?" will also be heard *Kaykwy tou nou?*, including the Cree interrogative particle *Kaykwy*, and the French *tou nou*. *Si tout*. "That's all.", *Aw baiꞥ*, "Oh well," are further examples. Sayings like *Zhi bustee koum aiꞥ kloo*. "I'm broke like a nail (flat broke)," show English influence.

Two minor syntactic patterns worth pointing out show a syntactic mixture of French into verb structure. In the first there is a French form to which is attached a subordinate (conjunct) Cree verb:

Saprawꞥ chidou-atoushkayyawn. "I have to go to work."

Foulay chidou-atoushkayt. "He/she has to go to work."

In this pattern the French-based *saprawꞥ*, *foulay* are uninflected, although a time distinction is carried in the basic form; person and aspectual markings are carried only in the Cree subordinate element.

The second pattern is that a limited number of Cree verbs can be formed around French nouns. *Kee-la boo-iwun* "It was muddy," is formed on *la boo* "mud."

Word order is heavily Cree, but with French influence. Prepositional phrases have already been mentioned. Verbs tend to occur last in the sentence, but following French pressure the direct object often appears after the verb for many speakers.

Another interesting detail is that whereas the noun phrase is basically French, there is one part that is not, namely the use of demonstratives. There are two forms that translate as "this": *ouma*, which applies to nouns which are in Cree inanimate, and *awa*, used with nouns which are animate. Even though Cree nouns are not used, their French counterparts take on Cree gender. Thus we have *En taib ouma*. "This is a table," but *Ain shyaiꞥ awa*. "This is a dog." The gender classification is not always obvious from meaning, since *l'arzhawꞥ* "money," *la rosh* "the rock," *li paiꞥ* "bread" are all animate in gender, and take animate demonstratives, which are also varied to show three degrees of distance from the speaker, and have distinct singular and plural forms. The masculine/feminine gender of French nouns is also maintained.

The most striking sociolinguistic characteristic of Michif is paradoxical. On the one hand it is very little known except by those who speak it, and even among them it tends to not be recognized or given little significance. On the other hand its wide distribution, in the states of North Dakota and Montana and the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta points to a remarkable cultural strength.

The unsure social status of Michif is reflected in the name itself. On the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota it is commonly known and used, although not everyone sees it as appropriate, some thinking that it's just a label for a mixed-up way of speaking. In locations I have visited in Manitoba the name is less likely to be used, some speakers saying that they do not know it. There they are more likely to talk of the language as "all mixed up," "tout melee," "broken Cree," or "half-breed language." Of these, Michif, or the not very much used "French Cree" seem the best choices. What this uncertainty in labelling indicates is that speaking Michif is not a matter of high prestige. Not even having a common name suggests a low social value. It looks as though half-breed language, like half-breed culture, has for many – these data would suggest that even for its users – less prestige value than either of the languages it derives from.

A similar attitude is shown in the reticence of the community of linguists to take Michif seriously. Although it's been in existence for well over a hundred years, it is only during the past 13 that linguists seem to have paid any attention to it. Algonquianists did not seem to be ready to notice a variety of Cree under so much influence from French. Recently this attitude has changed considerably. Growing interest in language contact phenomena, in pidgins and creoles, in language death, make the study of Michif important and interesting, since it's obviously a product of inter-language contact, although it does not seem to follow the patterns of development generally attributed to creoles. Its study should therefore have something to contribute to the understanding of how languages change and influence one another.

Parallel to this is an apparent increase in interest among speakers and in many cases their children who do not speak the language. As a matter of fact, such interest preceded active involvement from linguists and was an initiating force in the first linguistic studies. Members of the Turtle Mountain Band had begun to teach the language in adult education classes on the reservation, and students at the University of North Dakota invited a faculty member to become involved in its study. The interest seems to be growing, partly focused on or deriving from the publication of a small dictionary, not only in North Dakota, but perhaps especially in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.[2]

Still the overall situation is that Michif is a language or a dialect with a very shaky sense of self-esteem. And yet this seems to be in contradiction to evidence of its character, distribution, stability, and patterns of ascendency that it exhibits or has to have exhibited at some time in the past.

This contradiction may be seen in the already expressed notion speakers have that Michif is a haphazard mixture, that it lacks stability, that is is spoken in an extremely wide range of forms as people who speak it represent different language backgrounds. Thus even proponents of its use in Belcourt, North Dakota, state that it includes Ojibway when spoken by Ojibway speakers, more Cree when spoken by those who speak Cree, more or less French depending on how much French speaker and listener know, and that it may include liberal amounts of Lakota and Assiniboine, and of course, English. The evidence seems sparse or non-existent for the inclusion of Assiniboine or Lakota – I have seen no examples in the data I have collected. It is, of course, quite certain that there have been speakers of these languages on the reservation, who employed individualized learners' mixtures of the languages spoken around them, or who spoke Michif with considerable borrowing from their native languages. These characteristics are common in language learning situations, and need to be kept distinct from the very special circumstances which gave the ongoing institutionalization that is Michif.

The nature and extent of Ojibway influence is a more complicated matter. It may be that persons with Ojibway-speaking background speak Michif in a manner clearly distinct from those without that background or with less of it. This is a matter that bears investigation. It may be possible, when dialect studies are more advanced, to provide more accurate and detailed information about the Ojibway influence. Two things can be said now, however, with certainty. First, although Ojibway and Cree are closely related languages, the affix sets they use to inflect verb forms are clearly distinct one from the other, as also are the function words used to mark syntactic groupings, the connective particles. It is clearly the Cree forms that are used in Michif. Second, speakers of Ojibway are more conscious of the differences between Ojibway and Michif than are speakers of Michif. Ojibway speakers tend to know quite a bit of Michif – suggesting that Michif is the dominant native language on the reservation – but Michif speakers are much less likely to know maen sael ayow. Weenaniyiw see maen.

**grudge**—kisheeshtawit, geesheeshtawk, gisheeshtawk; She is holding a grudge against me. Noo pakataymoow ekisheeshtawit.

**gruff**—en grous lway, kawksheewstuwkoushiw (sounds gruff), ksheewnawkoushiw (looks gruff).

**grumble**—pitihkwatawmouhk; She'll grumble about anything. Pikoukaykwy ka-ouschi pitihkwatawmoow.

**guarantee**— garawnchee, aen garawnchee; I guarantee to pay it. Zhi garawnchee chitipahamawn. The car carries a guarantee. Li shawr ayow aen garawnchee.

**guard**—awiyek kawkenawawpikayt, pishkawpahta, kanwayista; Guard my suit case. Pishkawpahta moo suitcase.

**guardian**—awiyek kawpishkaymawt, soo garjaen; I am guardian of my grandchild. Niya bishkaymow noushishim. I'm his guardian. Niya soo garjaen.

**guest**—kawkee-oukayt, en koonpayeen, aen viziteur; The guest went home this morning. Kawkee-oukayt keekeewayw a mataen. My guest went home this morning. Keekeewayw ma koonpayeen a mataen. Moon viziteur keekeewayw a mataen.

**guidance**—awiyek chiweechihit, pishkawpamihchik; I need some guidance for my book. Saprawn awiyek chiweechihit pour moo leevr. Children need guidance. Lee zawnfawn saprawn chipishkawpamihchik.

**guide**—kishinahumuw, neekawneew, papawmoustahikounawn; Guide him to the place. Kishinahamuw ita la plaes. He guided us out of the forest. Keeneekawneew aywuyweestahikouyawhk daw li foray ouschi. He guided us around the area. Geepapawmoustahikounawn alawntour.

**guidepost**—aen sinn avik lee direksyoon aychimatayk.

**guilty**—koupaeb; He pleaded guilty on a misdeameanor. Il a pledi koupaeb akeemawyahkamikishit.

**gull**—aen zwayzou di mayr, aen moov; We have gulls around here too. Lee moov ayawwuk outa alawntour meena.

**gullible**—mouhchiwihk, baytaw, bayt; Being gullible you can't get anywhere. Kaw-mouhchiwihk namou nawnduw kitouhtawn. Kaw-li baytaw-iwiyen namou nawnduw kitouhtawn. Kaw-li bayt-iwiyen namou nawnduw kitouhtawn.

**gulp**—mouhchi kitawpayihchikayw, mshiwaypuystow, kitawpuyistow, lee grous gwarzhee; He just gulps his drink. Mouhchi kitawpayihchikayw. Awn grous gwarzhee kitawpuyistow soo filay. Mouhchi kitawpayihtow sou filay. She gulped with nervousness. Kawkitawpuyschikayw ki li narveu.

**gum**—1) chewing gum—la gum, mawmawkuhchikun; I like to chew gum. nimiyaymow la gum. Nimiyayhtaen mawmawkwahchikun. 2) of teeth—ita lee dawn kawkikwanamouki; My gums hurt. Ita mee dawn kawkikwamouki niweeshakayhtaen.

**gun**—aen feezee pawshkishikun; He used a gun on her. Aen feezee kee-awpachihtumouwayw. Pawshkishikun kee-awpachistamawayw.

**gun-moll**—aen gangster avek aen feezee sa jaeng.

**gunny sack**—aen sack awn balaezh; Potato farmers buy a lot of gunny sacks. Lee farmee'd pataek mihchet atawwaywuk lee sack awn balaezh.

**gunpowder**—la poudr a feezee, la poudr; Shot gun shells contain gunpowder. La poudr ashtayw daw lee grous kartoush.

**gunshot**—aen feezee matwaywayw, pawshkishikun matwaywayw, aen kout feezee; I heard a gunshot. Geepaystaen aen kout feezee.

**gush**—1) water—kitakoutayw; The water will gush out of the hole. Diloo kakitakoutayw daw li trou ouschi. 2) with enthusiasm—mishimoochikayistam; She gushed with enthusiasm. Keemishimoochikayistam aypeekishkwayt.

**gusher**—aen pwee'd wil ayshoohkaychiwuhk, awmachiwaykoutayw; The oil well is a gusher. Li pwee'd wil shoohkaychiwun. Li pwee'd wil mishishouhki-awmachiwaykoutayw.

significant amounts of Ojibway. This consciousness does not preclude the mixing of Ojibway into Michif, but it at least provides the possibility, even the likelihood, that this mixing will not be extensive.

English is a special case, because English is taking over. On the Turtle Mountain Reservation, almost all persons over 30 are monolingual speakers of English. In the language of the preceding generation, when they speak Michif – and there are a lot of pressures to keep them from doing so – there are a lot of English words. For the generation 60 or older, Michif is more common and natural, but even many of this group seem more natural in English than in their first language. Still the English in Michif, apparently for most speakers, is controlled by Michif. The words take French articles and are assigned animate-inanimate gender as well. *Li bus* is masculine and inanimate; *li cash* is masculine and animate. English will never participate in the sort of mixture that produced Michif. It will follow the pattern in which the contact leads to the extinction of one of the languages, in this case Michif.

From this it should be clear that Michif is quite heavily structured, and that this structure is Cree and French, and that therefore the cultural and historical factors that gave rise to its development were also predominantly French and Cree as well, although of course other cultures and languages, both European and Native American, were involved in the process in minor ways. The remarkable thing about Michif is not that languages influenced each other, nor even that there were persons who spoke a mixture of languages, but rather that the particular mixture, the one of French and Cree, took on a community-level stability, and became a medium of communication for an established cultural community over an extended period of time. In short, the mixture acted like a language in its own right.

Some deductions and conjectures and conclusions about the state of affairs that brought this about are relevant. It is, of course, obvious that we are not likely to find much direct evidence of the use of Michif when it had just begun – any writing would have been done in French, or if not, in Cree – so that to answer the question of when Michif first occurred is likely not possible. We can point, however, to some necessary conditions and to other highly probable ones.

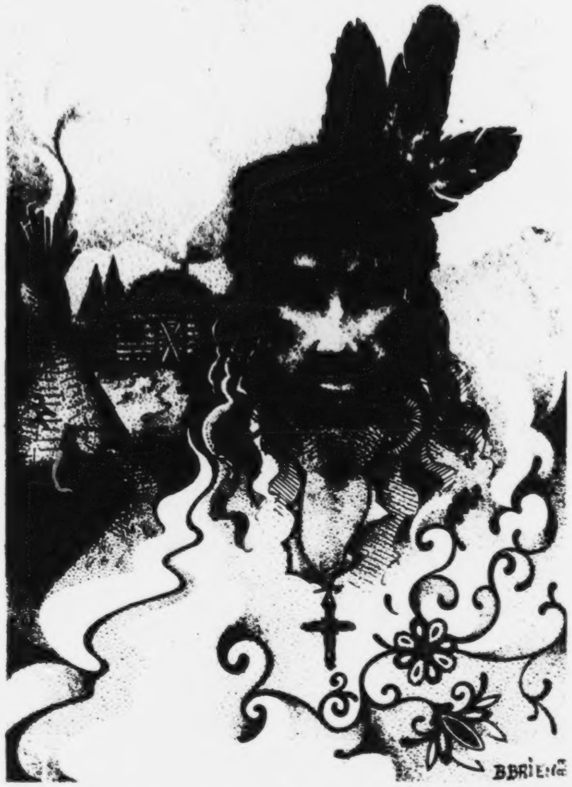
One such factor is that Michif could only have happened under a situation in which the French and Cree elements existed on a relatively equal basis. Otherwise one would have survived and the other disappeared. The balance that existed had to be one that made the equal survival of both likely. It may be possible to discover the nature of that balance at some future time by careful analysis and by consideration of possibilities and by continued examination of other similar situations where a similar result was not produced. For the present and by way of conjecture, I suggest that the earliest potential Michif speakers – and perhaps the later speakers as well – lived in closer contact with Indian than with European elements. This accounts for the strength of the Cree influence. The voyageurs were, after all, Frenchmen in Indian country. It also suggests that, although Metis people were a distinct cultural group from either French or Indian, they actually represent a range of variation, and Michif is a characteristic of the part of the Metis culture closest to its Native roots. The power of French as a language of conquest, albeit a mild-mannered one in comparison to some others, and its powerful institutions, in particular the fur trade and the Catholic Church, had to be part of the balance. Also the people who spoke Michif had to be in meaningful and ongoing contact with both language communities.

This ongoing contact is important. One of the characteristics that distinguishes Michif from pidgin and creole languages, as these are most commonly viewed, is that these are considered as having gone through radical simplification when they are formed, minimally complex structures employed in very limited social functions at the beginning, then developing back to a relatively full representation of usually one of the participating languages later. Since we do not have any samples of early Michif, we cannot, of course, exclude – at least not at the present stage of study – the possibility that it did in fact develop that way. There are however, a couple of good reasons for believing that it did not follow that route. One is that both French and Cree are present at a considerable level of complexity. It is difficult to imagine that a system for gender marking as complicated as the one employed in Michif, employing the formal systems of both languages simultaneously, would be reintroduced after a simplification away from both systems. The second reason is that, if Michif had developed following a normal pidgin-creole pattern, it would have gotten the complexities of both languages back only by staying in close and vital contact with both speaking communities, that is by having the kind of cultural balance mentioned. So it's easier to accept that it developed in a situation in which both French and Cree were maintained at a high level of complexity and in varied social functions over a considerable period of time. This is equivalent to saying that

Michif could not have been produced except in a context of ongoing community bilingualism. In saying this, however, we must realize that Michif being the product of such bilingualism does not require that all or even typical speakers of it be bilingual. As a matter of fact, one rule-of-thumb diagnostic of whether Michif is spoken in a particular place is whether or not there are speakers who do not know Cree nouns, since Michif speakers have replaced Cree nouns by and large by French counterparts.

Further, there must have been a highly natural sense of cultural or community identification with Michif speech – notwithstanding the poor self-identification characteristic of many Michif-speaking communities. The primary evidence for this is the westward distribution of the language. It looks as though it is well represented all across the path of Western migration of Metis people. It therefore must have been well established before that migration took place, and it was strong enough to survive after that move, suggesting that it was regarded as the natural property of the people who spoke it, part of their cultural heritage. Suggestions of activities that may have helped to develop and maintain this strength could include the seasonal buffalo hunts, which brought large numbers of people together, the Red River cart transportation system, specifically agricultural Metis communities. Other evidences might be seen in the appearance of Michif-speaking Metis, along with Ojibway, seeking a land settlement in the sequence of treaties that led to the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota. And it is almost unquestionable that the followers of Louis Riel were speakers of Michif.

From the apparent self-assuredness of the earlier period of Michif to the apparent lack of identity of modern representatives, at least insofar as speaking Michif is concerned, there seems to be a considerable change. There does seem to be at least some loss of prestige on the part of speakers who do not wish to attach any significance to Michif or to admit that they know it. Still there are evidences that highly visible recognition is not necessarily an important factor in the health of Michif. On the Turtle Mountain Reservation there seems never to have been a clear agreement on the importance of speaking Michif. Some people accept it as a natural mark of cultural identity, others assign it a minimal or negative value. Until recently, no one seems to have thought seriously of writing it or collecting a sample for preservation or of passing it along to younger generations through formal instruction. Still, the history of the reservation is one of the supplanting of Ojibway by Michif. In a survey conducted in 1972, a fairly large number of persons on the reservation were asked about the languages they, their parents, and their grandparents spoke. In many cases there was reference to a parent or a grandparent who spoke Ojibway or French, but the person concerned spoke Michif. There were no instances reported of speakers moving from Michif to Ojibway.[3] This situation, in which a language or dialect may not have official prestige but still operates in a way that reflects prestige, is not uncommon. It is the sort of thing that allows, for example, Black English to have little recognition in the educational or business establishment of the United States but still wield tremendous social power, both as the dialect of importance for those who speak it and in the slang of the officially prestigious, witness words like "turkey" and the vocabulary of jazz music.



*Native artist's conceptualization of a Michif speaker (courtesy Bennett Brien).*

The lack of a significant historical record and the unlikelihood of finding one are limitations for discovering all we'd like to know about Michif. Still there is an available resource which may, in time, produce evidence from which the lacking history may be reconstructed. This resource also provides vitality to the project, since it is the existence of native speakers, in a wide range of places and circumstances. A preliminary look at four Michif-speaking communities in North Dakota and Manitoba suggests that each of these communities has followed a distinct path in relationship to the language.[4] Along with further study of these areas can come similar studies in communities where Michif is or has been spoken.

In addition to what may be learned from sociolinguistic investigations in all Metis communities, especially in those known to have spoken Michif, there is a great deal to be learned from the content of what older speakers have to say. Accounts of what people remember from 50 years ago are important resources for discovering what was done 100 years ago; memories of what they were told by parents and grandparents are a primary source, even for conjectures on the origins and patterns of development for Michif. This work needs to be approached in a straightforward and systematic manner.

Not unrelated to this is the study of other similar linguistic phenomena. Patrick Douad reported a trilingual situation in Alberta in which Metis speak Cree, simplified French, and English in close cultural functional control, but do not seem to speak Michif.[5] New studies of Metis French by Robert Papaen are also important.[6] There seems to be some evidence that other mixtures may exist or be developing, and perhaps evidence of Bungi, a combination of English and Native American said to have been spoken by English Metis, may also be found to round out the picture.

John Chapman Crawford was born on July 5, 1926, in Quinnesec, Michigan, and spent most of his boyhood in the Upper Peninsula. He graduated three times from the University of Michigan: 1947 (BS Chemistry), 1948 (MA Linguistics), 1960 (PhD Linguistics). From 1951 until 1969 he worked as a field linguist with the Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translator in Mexico. Since 1969 he has been a member of the faculty of the English Department at the University of North Dakota.

Crawford's publications include two book-length studies: *Totontepec Mixe Phonotagmemics*, published by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in 1963, and *The Michif Dictionary*, of which he was the editor, published by Pemmican Publications, in 1983.

### Footnotes

[1] The writing system used here was worked out by the author and various members of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, especially the authors of The Michif Dictionary. It is written "as it sounds" (English based), and should be regarded as tentative.

[2] Patline Laverdure and Ida Rose Allard, *The Michif Dictionary* (Winnipeg, Pemmican Publications, 1983).

[3] John Crawford, unpublished.

[4] John Crawford, "Speaking Michif in Four Metis Communities," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* III, 1 (1983): 47-55.

[5] Patrick C. Douad, "Metis: A Case of Triadic Linguistic Economy," Anthropological Linguistics XXII,9 (1980): 392-414.

[6] Robert A. Papaen, Quelques remarques sur un parler francais meconnu de l'ouest canadien: le metis, *Revue quebecoise de linguistique* XIV, 1 (1985): 114-139.

# A Brief History of The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians

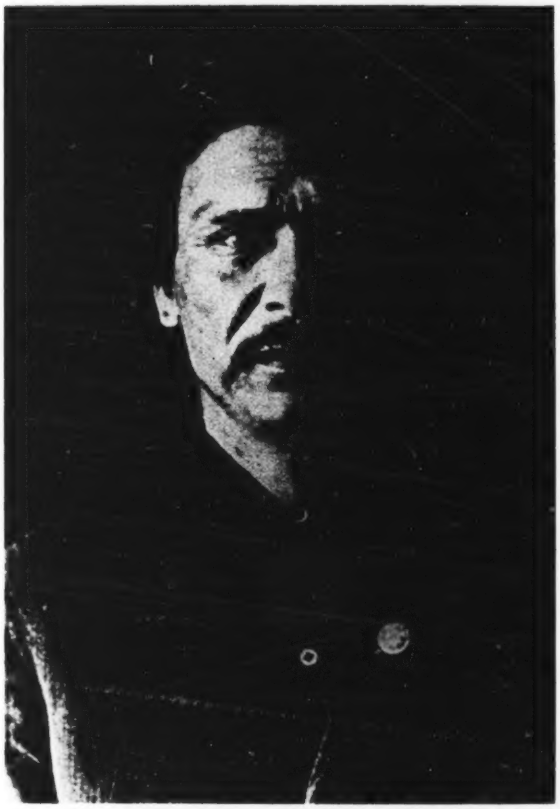
by Dennis de Montigny

The origin and history of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibway Indians is a very strange and colorful segment of the history of North Dakota. No other ethnic group in the state has been so dramatically changed, politically, racially or socially, as the Turtle Mountain Band. However, the origin of the band, which by the 1850s was located and well established in the Turtle Mountains, has been somewhat ignored in most contemporary North Dakota history texts.

According to Aun nish e naubay (Patrick Gourneau) in his book *History of the Turtle Mountains Band of Chippewa Indians*:

"The Turtle Mountain Band is actually a segment of a group of Indians termed by identity and demography as Plains Ojibway or Bungi (Bunge). The word Bungi, which means 'a little bit,' is more correctly pronounced pungee. It most likely refers to the mixture of tribes: mostly Ojibway, a little bit Cree, a little bit Ottawa, and also a little bit Assiniboine and Sioux. The Assiniboine Indians were originally a band of the Sioux tribe. When the other bands of the same tribe separated them from the tribe in war, the Ojibway tribe named them Assiniboine, which means Stone Sioux. Assiniboine is correctly pronounced ah-sinee-buan. They, then, became loosely associated with the Crees and Plains Ojibway. If the Plains Ojibway family tree was viewed as standing squarely on the United States-Canadian boundary, there would be approximately 25 on the Canadian side and ten on the United States side. The bands are located on Indian Reservations and communities throughout Canada and the United States (Gourneau, p. 5).

"There are other sources which are deeply involved in the formation of the Turtle Mountain band which cannnot be overlooked. This deep involvement is due to intermarriage with other tribes such as the Cree, Ottawa, Sioux, Assiniboine and European stock consisting mainly of French, Scotch, English, Irish and a few other nationalities of European origin (Gourneau, p. 5).



*Louis Lenoir. Descendant of John Lenoir, Captain of Police for Chief Little Shell in 1882, Turtle Mountain Councilman in 1911.*

"The Ojibway nation of the woodlands is essential. The reason for this group being listed as Plains Ojibway is that they originally emerged out of the woodlands of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Ontario to follow a significant part of their early-day life with the white man and the fur trade. Following the fur trade finally led them to the prairie regions, which activated identity as distinct Plains Indians. They became one of the most remarkable Plains Indian tribes in the United States and Canada. They finally migrated as far west as Montana in the United States and Saskatchewan in Canada. By battling with the Plains Indian groups, the ancestors of the Turtle

Mountain Band finally attained, by conquest, a carved establishment of vast territory for themselves and for their descendants" (Gourneau, p. 5).

The geographic location, and the unique variety of flora and fauna found in the Turtle Mountains, hastened the development of the Metchif (Metis) culture in the area. This Metchif/Chippewa/Cree mixture is now located in the north central portion of the state known as the Turtle Mountains, a range of hills carved by glaciers. With an abundance of fur-bearing animals, trappers and traders found the area a desirable place for a trading post – to cater to the Indians' wants in exchange for furs – during the era of the fur trade.

The close proximity of the Souris River made the area accessible by water. Later the Red River cart made its appearance for freight hauling. A cart trail, which bordered the east side of the mountains, linked Winnipeg with the Missouri River forts and the Mandan villages. Long trains of carts would often frequent the area. The arrival and departure of cart trains were a cause for much feasting, dancing, and general merriment. The sound of the fiddle would often be accompanied by a jigger doing the Red River Jig, a unique combination of Indian dance steps and Irish/Scottish jigs.

"The Last of the Great Buffalo Hunts in the Turtle Mountains" recalls when the last great hunt in the state occurred in the Turtle Mountains. In her book, *The History of Rolette County*, Laura Law reports that the last great hunt occurred in the region of the Turtle Mountains about 1865. "The Dakota Territory was created on March 2, 1861, by a bill signed by President Buchanan just before his term of office ended. Two days after the territory was created, as one of the first official acts of the new president, Abraham Lincoln was to appoint his old friend, Dr. William Jayne, as governor of the territory, of which Yankton was the capital. By 1873 an act of the Legislature divided North Dakota into counties; what is now Rolette County was then known as Buffalo County. In 1883, the name Rolette was given to the county in honor of Jolly Joe Rolette, a Metis/Metchif from Pembina.

On October 2, 1863, the Chippewa handed all the land held at Red Lake and Pembina to the United States government. However, the Turtle Mountain Band claimed all the land in the mountains as far south as Devils Lake and east to White Earth, Minnesota. On October 4, 1882, the Indian Department at Washington, D.C., directed the general land office to take steps to revoke their claims and to restore to public domain all this land. The Indians at once went into action to protect their rights. From Belcourt they sent attorney S. B. Bottineau to Washington to present their claims. He secured for them the Turtle Mountain Reservation, an area about 32 miles from north to south and 24 miles from east to west, or about five townships." (Law, p. 20). But a recommendation of Cyrus Beede, who was sent into the Turtle Mountains to make an inspection in 1883, cut down the area again because he failed to take the mixed-breeds into account. In 1884, the reservation as it stands today was created: it includes only two townships, Ingebretson and Couture.

## History of Belcourt, North Dakota

It is difficult to determine exactly when the village of Belcourt was named. Presumably it was named during and shortly after Father George Antoine Belcourt, for whom the town is named, travelled through the Turtle Mountains performing missionary work during the 1850s. Law indicates that Francis La Porte built the first log structure to accommodate travelers. Shortly thereafter, the Saint Mary's Academy was built to provide classroom instruction for the Indian children.

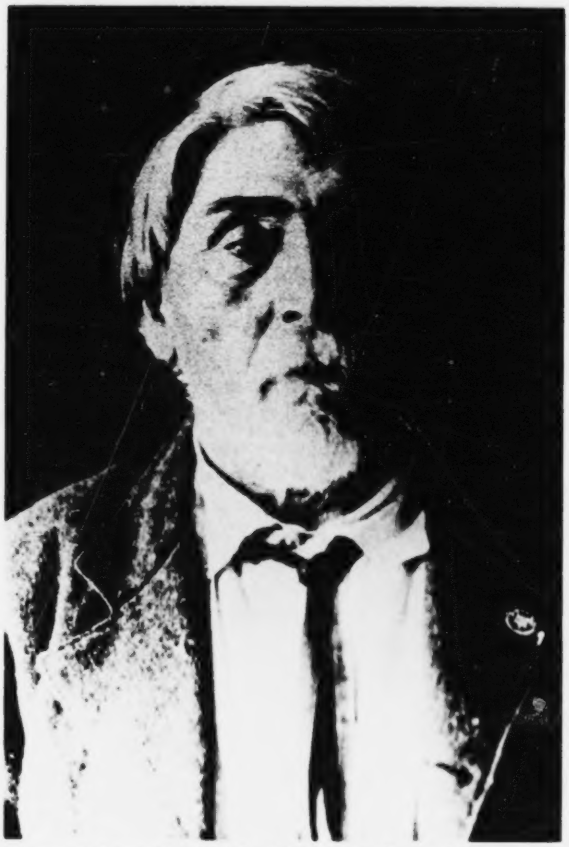
The first government Indian Agency appeared in the late 1800s, according to some older inhabitants of the Turtle Mountains. The

*John Bottineau, Turtle Mountain Métis Attorney who represented the Turtle Mountain Chippewa in 1882.*

first government agent was a man named Welch. Shortly thereafter, stores were opened by Alex Charlebois and M. H. LeBrun. The Charlebois and LeBruns were prominent businessmen in Belcourt well into the 1960s. The LeBrun family still carries on business activities in Belcourt.

Business was usually slow throughout the community until the 1960s, when a new high school was built and many local people were employed. Prior to that, many people of Belcourt had to find employment off the reservation doing seasonal labor. Many new Indian/Metchif-owned businesses and public services have opened in the Belcourt area within the past decade: the Turtle Mountain Mart built in 1979, many different church denominations, three service stations, a new hospital built in 1970, a radio station which began broadcasting in 1975, construction companies, electronic plants, an alcoholism center, a multi-million dollar housing project, a new high school, and a manufacturing plant. Belcourt also has a community college, which is flourishing under the direction of the Turtle Mountain Tribal Council and other local Indian/Metchif people of the reservation.

The Turtle Mountain Band will continue to thrive and to adapt to contemporary society. Most important, however, is that the French/Chippewa Metchifs and full-bloods will continue to maintain their customs and traditions where jigging, fiddling and Indian celebrations can still be observed throughout the year.



*Henry Poitras, Turtle Moutain Councilman 1900.*

Dennis de Montigny teaches psychology at the Turtle Mountain Community College, Belcourt, North Dakota.

# Finding Your French-Canadian Roots: A Brief Guide

by Wiley Pope

## Introduction

"During the French colonial period from 1608 to 1763 . . . some 10,000 French immigrants came to New France, but only about 6,000 to 7,000 stayed. It was from this small number that the population grew, reaching 65,000 when the colony passed under British rule. After 1760, all French immigration ceased." (*Encyclopedia Americana*, 1960, v. 23, p. 72.)

Of those French who went to Canada, some became fur traders and travelled far from the settled areas. Many of the fur traders married Indian women. Their descendants are often called *Métis*.

Since they are descended from so few immigrants, practically any book on early French-Canadians will contain information on some ancestors of nearly everyone of French-Canadian descent. These works include genealogies, biographical directories, genealogical magazines, etc. Researchers should therefore consult *all* available French-Canadian sources.

After the American Revolution, the British government subsidized immigration to British North America. During certain periods, about ⅓ of the immigrants to Canada later emigrated to the United States.

Call numbers in this paper are usually for the Minnesota Historical Society Reference Library. Many of the more important items mentioned in this paper have been microfilmed, and can be borrowed on loan from the Genealogical Society of Utah Library at any (Mormon) Branch Genealogical Library.

In addition, many items, including the census records of Canada, can be borrowed from the Public Archives of Canada by any library which participates in the inter-library loan program.

## How To Begin

In the past few years family history and genealogy have become hobbies enjoyed by people of practically all ages and occupations. Young and old are finding out what a real pleasure it is to learn about their own past, their ancestors, and their relatives. Your family is just as exciting, and your ancestors are just as interesting as any make-believe hero or heroine of novels and movies. What is more, your ancestors are real people – part of *your* family.

Getting started in tracing your family is so simple that many people miss the obvious. Start with yourself. The basic items of information genealogists seek are: name, sex, birth date and place, marriage date and place, death date and place, burial date and place, and names of parents, children, husbands and wives. You can make or purchase charts like the ones on the following pages and begin at once. The chart that shows an outline of your ancestry is called an ancestor chart, or a pedigree chart.

You are person no. 1 on the ancestor chart. Your father is no. 2. Your mother is no. 3, etc. You know your own name, birth date and place. If you are married, you know the date and place of marriage, or you have that information available. You know the name of your husband or wife. Write all of that information down on the form. Continue by recording what you know of your parents, grandparents, etc. When you have completed what you can from your own records, ask your relatives for additional information.

As you fill out the form, you should remember that there are many places where information is recorded in your home, and in the homes of you relatives. Certificates and other records should be checked, even for information that you remember well. Memories are sometimes in error. A few places to search for information are: Family Bibles; birth, marriage and death certificates; wedding pictures; golden wedding books, baby books, etc. There are many other sources for information.

As you are gathering information for your ancestor chart, you should also be filling out family group sheets. The ancestor chart contains spaces for an outline of your ancestry, and the family group sheet has spaces for an outline of a family unit. You should fill out family group sheets for your own family, and for each of your ancestral families. In addition, many researchers collect information on the families of their near relatives: brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. Examples of completed family group sheets and ancestor charts are included within this "How To Begin" section.

On the right side of the ancestor chart there is room for very little information except the name of the ancestor. This generation is continued on other charts. The first chart you fill out is no. 1. The continuation sheets should be numbered 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. If you number the charts in the order that you fill them out, you can save yourself a lot of difficulty. Many researchers are concerned about numbering the sheets in their "proper" order. Generally, those systems are much more difficult to use than the simple 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 that we suggest.

We believe that it is illogical to use a complicated system when a simple system is adequate. If you decide to rearrange your ancestor charts at some time in the future, it is easy to remember the sheets. Note that the numbering system consists of two parts. A continuation number is listed on the right side of one sheet. Then on the continuation sheet there is a space to record the person number and sheet number where that person was continued from. Completing both parts of the reference allows you to start anywhere in the ancestry and read forward or back. Keep the ancestor chart numbers consecutive. Do not save numbers for sheets that you may never have.

Family group sheets should be filed alphabetically.

Besides the very basic data recorded on the ancestor charts, and on the family group sheets, you will probably keep additional information. If there is just a little information, write it on the front or on the back of the family group sheet. If you have more information than will fit on the back of the family group sheet, file it in a separate section, alphabetically by the name of the person you are writing about. Additional information might consist of biographies, pictures, certificates, stories, etc.

After you have obtained all of the information you can from home sources and relatives, you are ready to begin research outside the home.

## Research Outside The Home

After you have completed your family group sheets and ancestor charts as much as you can, there will still be many blanks. The information you have is essential for two reasons: first, to show what you know and what you don't know; and second, to give direction for the research to follow.

## Useful Addresses

(Printed forms and books. Write for catalogs.)

Everton Publishers, Inc.
P.O. Box 368
Logan, UT 84321

Park Genealogical Book Co.
3601 - 78th Avenue North
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

Stevenson's Genealogical Center
230 West 1230 North
Provo, UT 84160

Ye Olde Genealogie Shoppe
P.O. Box 39128
Indianapolis, IN 46239

(Books only. Write for catalogs, genealogies, county histories, marriage records, how-to books, etc.

Genealogical Publishing Co.
111 Water Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Goodspeed's Book Shop
18 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

Minnesota Family Trees
718 Simms Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55106

Tuttle Antiquarian Books, Inc.
P.O. Box 541
Rutland, VT 05701

University Microfilms
300 Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

# Ancestor Chart

Name of Compiler Wiley R. Pope
Address 718 Sims Ave.
City, State St. Paul, MN 55106
Date 5 Mar 1978

Person No. 1 on this chart is the same person as No. ____ on chart No. ____.

Chart No. 1

b. Date of Birth
p.b. Place of Birth
m. Date of Marriage
d. Date of Death
p.d. Place of Death

4 Charles Theodore POPE (Father of No. 2)
b. 31 Mar 1886
p.b. Vernal, Uintah, Utah
m. 19 Oct 1910
d. 18 Mar 1958
p.d Vernal, Uintah, Utah

2 Lloyd Theodore POPE (Father of No. 1)
b. 13 July 1911
p.b. Vernal, Uintah, Utah
m. 21 June 1934
d.
p.d

5 (1) Lois Viola MASSEY (Mother of No. 2)
b. 29 May 1888
p.b. Winifrede. Kanawha, W.Va.
d. 29 Dec 1937
p.d. Vernal, Uintah, Utah

1 Wiley Roger POPE
b. 10 Oct 1941
p.b. Cut Bank, Glacier, Montana
m. 22 Nov 1963
d.
p.d.

6 Alfred Heber POWELL. (Father of No. 3)
b. 5 Nov 1884
p.b. Vernal, Uintah, Utah
m. 8 Aug 1906
d. 23 Feb 1972
p.d Vernal, Uintah, Utah

3 Oris POWELL (Mother of No. 1)
b. 4 Dec 1915
p.b. Vernal, Uintah, Utah
d.
p.d.

7 Effie Jane RASMUSSEN (Mother of No. 3)
b. 20 Feb 1889
p.b Jensen, Uintah, Utah
d. 12 Oct 1973
p.d. Vernal, Uintah, Utah

Juanita Fay JONES (Spouse of No. 1)
b. 15 Apr 1943 d.
p.b. Lehi, Utah, Ut. p.d.

8 John Theodore POPE (Father of No. 4)
b. 2 Mar 1860
p.b. Farmington, Davis, Utah
m. 12 Apr 1879
d. 1 Jan 1943
p.d Vernal, Uintah, Utah

9 (1) Charlotte Ann STOCK (Mother of No. 4)
b. 30 Dec 1862
p.b. Lynne, Weber, Utah
d. 13 Nov 1918
p.d Vernal, Uintah, Utah

10 John Didley MASSEY (Father of No. 5)
b. 15 May 1858
p.b. Ohela, Boone, W.Va.
m. 15 Jan 1880
d. 14 July 1920
p.d Salt Lake City, S.L., UT

11 Cyntha Frances JARRELL (Mother of No. 5)
b. 17 Apr 1864
p.b. Peach Tree, Raleigh, W.Va.
d. 13 Dec 1957
p.d. Vernal, Uintah, Utah

12 Alfred POWELL (Father of No. 6)
b. 1 Oct 1857
p.b. Bradford, Wilts, England
m. 2 Aug 1883
d. 8 Jan 1930
p.d Vernal, Uintah, Utah

13 Annie GRAY (Mother of No. 6)
b. 22 June 1862
p.b. Tickton, Yorks, England
d. 4 Dec 1898
p.d. Vernal, Uintah, Utah

14 John Taylor RASMUSSEN (Father of No. 7)
b. 2 Oct 1868
p.b. Leland, La Salle, Illinois
m. 3 May 1888
d. 12 Aug 1938
p.d Vernal, Uintah, Utah

15 Ester Jane HARDY (Mother of No. 7)
b. 10 July 1871
p.b. Beaver, Beaver, Utah
d. 16 May 1946
p.d. Vernal, Uintah, Utah

16 Robert POPE (Father of No. 8, Cont. on chart No. 2)
b. 16 June 1828
m. 1 Oct 1851
d. 14 July 1915

17 (1) Sarah LEDUC (Mother of No. 8, Cont. on chart No. 3)
b. 21 July 1835
d. 13 Dec 1918

18 (2) John STOCK (Father of No. 9, Cont. on chart No. 4)
b. 12 Oct 1820
m. 7 Dec 1861
d. 18 Oct 1896

19 (2) Frances Gillson GIBBS (Mother of No. 9, Cont. on chart No. 5)
b. 15 Jan 1837
d. 24 Apr 1921

20 Lewis Fry Donnelly MASSEY (Father of No. 10, Cont. on chart No. 6)
b. 1834
m. 1852
d. 16 Nov 1897

21 Nancy COOPER (Mother of No. 10, Cont. on chart No. 7)
b. 1835
d.

22 John Poindexter JARRELL (Father of No. 11, Cont. on chart No. 8)
b. 2 Mar 1835
m.
d. 23 Apr 1875

23 Julia Ann PETRY (Mother of No. 11, Cont. on chart No. 9)
b. 18 May 1837
d. 21 Jan 1919

24 George "S" POWELL (Father of No. 12, Cont. on chart No. 10)
b. 18 Mar 1805
m.
d. 1869

25 Patience DREW (Mother of No. 12, Cont. on chart No. 11)
b. 8 June 1826
d. 11 Apr 1899

26 John GRAY (Father of No. 13, Cont. on chart No. 12)
b. 2 Oct 1832
m 27 Nov 1856
d. 4 June 1883

27 Mary WOODMANCY (Mother of No. 13, Cont. on chart No. 13)
c. 19 Nov 1834
d. 4 June 1875

28 (1) Rasmus RASMUSSEN (Father of No. 14, Cont. on chart No. 14)
b. 12 Jan 1829
m 22 Apr 1858
d. 12 July 1871

29 Elisabeth or Lisbet ELIASEN (Mother of No. 14, Cont. on chart No. 14)
b. 11 Mar 1837
d. 25 Aug 1813

30 Lewis Ogeah HARDY (Father of No. 15, Cont. on chart No. 15)
b. 17 Oct 1803
m 3 Apr 1855
d. 27 Mar 1895

31 Clarinda Jane DOFFELMYRE (Mother of No. 15, Cont. on chart No. 16)
b. 3 Apr 1840
d. 26 Dec 1906

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**FAMILY GROUP No.** ____ **Husband's Full Name** Hanson MILLS

**This Information Obtained From:**
Rice County Census, Birth, Marriage & Death records. Hanson Mills' pension record.

| Husband's Data | Day Month Year | City, Town or Place | County or Province, etc. | State or Country | Add. Info. on Hus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Birth | 1835 | | | Canada | 25 in 18 |
| Chr'nd | | | | | |
| Mar. | about 1859 | | | | |
| Death | 23 Oct 1884 | | | South Dakota | |
| Burial | | | | South Dakota | |

Places of Residence Morristown, Rice, Minn.
Occupation Cabinetmaker Church Affiliation Military Rec.
Other wives, if any. No. (1) (2) etc. Make separate sheet for each mar. (2) 1 Oct 1883 Arvilla Parsel DOTY, b. 1851
His Father Mother's Maiden Name

**Wife's Full Maiden Name** (1) Mary Emerette POPE

| Wife's Data | Day Month Year | City, Town or Place | County or Province, etc. | State or Country | Add. Info. on Wif |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Birth | 1841 | Oswego | Oswego | New York | 9 in 185 |
| Chr'nd | | | | | |
| Death | | | | | |
| Burial | | | | | |

Places of Residence New York, Fond du Lac Co., Wis.; Rice Co., Minn.
Occupation if other than Housewife Church Affiliation Protestent Episc
Other husbands, if any. No. (1) (2) etc. Make separate sheet for each mar.
Her Father Robert Mattock POPE Mother's Maiden Name Rebecca WHITTAKE

Compiler Wiley R. Pope
Address 718 Sims Ave.
City, State St. Paul, MN
Date 55106 12 May 1978

| Sex | Children's Names in Full (Arrange in order of birth) | Children's Data | Day Month Year | City, Town or Place | County or Province, etc. | State or Country | Add. Info. on Chi |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| F | 1 Sarah Adeline MILLS | Birth | 13 Apr 1862 | Morristown | Rice | Minnesota | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | | | | | |
| | | Death | | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |
| M | 2 Isaac Pope MILLS | Birth | Oct 1865 | | | | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | | | | | |
| | | Death | Aug 1869 | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |
| M | 3 Edward Hanson MILLS | Chr. | 22 Nov 1868 | | | | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | | | | | |
| | | Death | | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |
| M | 4 George MILLS | Birth | Sep 1868 | | | | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | | | | | |
| | | Death | Aug 1869 | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |
| M | 5 George MILLS | Birth | 13 Apr 1871 | | | | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | | | | | |
| | | Death | | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |
| M | 6 (son) | Birth | 1872 | | | | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | | | | | |
| | | Death | | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |
| | 7 (Child) | Birth | 1875 | | | | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | | | | | |
| | | Death | | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |
| F | 8 Annie MILLS | Birth | | | | | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | 27 Jan 1876 | | | | |
| | | Death | | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |
| | 9 | Birth | | | | | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | | | | | |
| | | Death | | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |
| | 10 | Birth | | | | | |
| | Full Name of Spouse* | Mar. | | | | | |
| | | Death | | | | | |
| | | Burial | | | | | |

*If married more than one No. each mar. (1) (2) etc. and list in "Add. info. on children" column. Use reverse side for additional children, other notes, references or information.

You should now analyze the information you have for dates and places. Records are created at a particular place at a particular time for a particular purpose, and are not normally placed in a national index. You must know the place where a person lived, died, or was buried before you can do original research. As you learn about various types of records, the dates and places you do have will be the keys to knowing which records to search. For example, if a person were born in Minnesota in 1859, you would probably find additional information about the family in the 1860 census of Minnesota.

There are five main types of record repositories outside the home that you should become familiar with: libraries, archives, courthouses, cemeteries, and churches.

There are many places that offer classes in genealogical research, including: adult education programs, historical societies, genealogical societies, public libraries, and Mormon churches. The proper name of the Mormon Church is "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." If there is a congregation in your area, it should be listed in the telephone directory.

## Finding Birth, Marriage And Death Places

In order to find the records about your ancestors, you need to identify the places where the people were living, and when they were there, and hope that the records which were created will serve your purpose. Information in any record is dependent on what is required for the record, what was known by the informant, and what was recorded by whoever created the record.

Be very careful when you find a record for someone who may be the person you seek. Try to verify the identify of that individual through various records. It is easy to make an error when names are similar.

## Home Sources

Research begins at home.

Family traditions sometimes indicate where ancestors came from. Family tradition may be correct, but it should also be verified or disproved.

Passports give some information, such as addresses. If you can find a passport or a related document that your ancestor had, it might give the name of the home town.

Old photographs can be especially helpful. Look on the front of the photograph and the frame for the name of the photographer, and his or her place of business. Examine the back of the photograph for dates and places. Examine the picture itself for such things as street signs, business signs, monuments, etc., that may give a clue about where the picture was taken.

Certificates of various kinds may indicate place of birth or residence. Look for certificates of birth, baptism, confirmation, graduation, military service, death, burial, etc.

Letters from friends in the old home town may help. Look for the postmark, or something in the letter to indicate places.

Address books may have addresses of friends or relatives who were left behind.

Diaries sometimes indicate where people lived, either directly, or by deduction from information that is provided.

Family Bibles may reveal where people were born, married and died.

## Outside The Home

Church records: Some Quebec church records begin in 1621.

Baptism records. People are often baptized in the locality where they were born, but you need to know the place in order to find the record.

Confirmation records frequently indicate place of baptism. If there were small children in the families, confirmation records might tell where the children were baptized.

Marriage records may tell names of parents and where they were living.

Burial records often tell where a person was born.

Membership records may tell where a person moved from.

Civil records: some civil birth, marriage and death records are indexed on a state, provincial, or a national basis. Become familiar with the records in the area of your research.

Marriage records in the United States seldom, if ever, tell place of birth or former residence. They do normally tell the county of residence of the bride and the groom.

Death records usually tell place and date of birth and names of parents. Many U.S. death records only give the country or state of birth.

Obituaries may be a rewarding source of information. It is often necessary to get the death record in order to have an exact death date. Since few newspapers are indexed, you need the death date and place in order to know which newspaper to search, and for which time period.

Biographical sketches in local histories may tell where a person came from. This information is often unreliable. But the clues found in a local history may help you find reliable data.

Census records of Canada for 1841 (1842, Quebec), 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881 are available and may be searched. You need at least to know the county of residence before attempting any kind of search in census records. United States census records normally only say "Canada" for place of birth, since the form requests "State or Country of birth." Census records for the United States and Canada can be ordered at the (Mormon) Branch Libraries, or at the public library. Quebec censuses are also available for 1639-1640, 1666, 1667, 1681, 1825, and 1831.

United States naturalization applications, 1906 to the present, usually list the place of birth, and the last place of residence outside the U.S., along with many other items of information. Earlier applications may list date of arrival, port of entry, and name of ship, or may only state that the applicant renounced allegiance to his or her former ruler, and desired U.S. citizenship. There is generally no port of entry record for people coming to the United States from Canada.

The most important single index for research in many states and countries is the International Genealogical Index (IGI), formerly known as the Computer File Index (CFI). This index includes about 80 million records of births and marriages. The IGI is available at (Mormon) Branch Libraries. Using the index is quite simple if you know what state or country your family came from. Turn to the proper geographical section of the IGI, take out the fiche containing the section of names you are interested in, and look up the name of the ancestor you are searching for. Remember that only births (or christenings) and marriages are included in the IGI. The index is alphabetical by the name of person. For marriage records, the name of spouse is given. For birth or christening records, the names of the parents are given. In addition, the date and place are provided. Using this source, you might easily locate some of your ancestors. If you don't locate your family, you may still find locations where families by that name have lived. The IGI is not yet complete, and many thousands of records are added to it each year. About every three years the Genealogical Society of Utah produces an updated version of the IGI.

As you search, try to determine if the person you are looking for might have filled out some kind of form which would show the birthplace. Employment applications, school enrollment applications, fraternal organizations, life insurance companies, etc., may all request information about the birthplace.

Also consider the following. In addition to searching for the one individual you are concerned about, search also for other members of the family. They may have been born in the same place.

When you find the family in the census, notice where the neighbors were born. It was not uncommon for neighbors to emigrate together and live near each other after arrival. The neighbor's home town might be the place you are searching for.

Sometimes researchers try all of the sources listed above, and still do not find the people they are looking for. At that point, the researcher must be patient. When you can't seem to make any progress, you might go back to books that tell what records exist. The record you are looking for may exist somewhere. But you need to look. And you need to know where to look.

Finally, remember that many researchers enjoy this pursuit for many years. You have thousands of ancestors. If one line seems to difficult, try another line. Usually researchers have one line they can research on while they study how to find the missing information on other lines.

## That's Good, But What Do I Do Now?

Let us suppose that you are starting at the beginning with no family records and no relatives to ask for information.

The first thing to do would be to get a copy of your birth certificate, or baptismal certificate (for infant baptism only). That certificate should tell the date and place of your birth, as well as naming your parents. Birth certificates are usually in the county courthouses of the United States, and at the Prothonatory's Offices and churches in Quebec (baptismal record). If you know where members of your family are buried, you can go to the cemetery, or write or telephone the cemetery offices for death dates. Having the death dates and places, you can search newspapers for obituaries, which may give additional information about the family. Fill out ancestor charts and family group sheets as you get information.

You may be able to trace the family in county records, or the prothonotary's records for several generations. If you find the place where the family attended church you may be able to find several generations of your family in the church records.

You can get a good map of Quebec from the Canadian Tourist Office. Look in the telephone directory to see if there is a branch of that office in the city where you live, or in a nearby large city. Just call them. You should find the map to be very useful as you are researching.

When you have traced your family back to about 1900 you should visit a good genealogical library and find out if they have family histories for any of the families you have discovered. The following books list genealogies that are available.

1. Daughters of the American Revolution. *Library Catalog*. vol. 1, 1982. 398 p. "Family histories and genealogies." Z 5313 .U5 D38 v. 1 FOLIO

2. Kaminkow, Marion J. *Genealogies in the Libaray of Congress: A Bibliography*. 1972. 2 volumes. REF Z 5319 f.U3

3. Kaminkow, Marion J. *Genealogies in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography: Supplement, 1972-1976*. 1977. 285 p. REF Z 5319 f.U53 suppl. FOLIO

4. Kaminkow, Marion J. *A Complement to Genealogies in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography*. 1981. 1118 pages. 20,000 genealogies not in the Library of Congress. REF Z 5319 .K35

5. Roy, Antoine. "Bibliographie de généalogies et histoires de familles." In: Quebec (Province). Archives. *Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Quebec pour 1940-1941*. Quebec, 1941. p. 95-332. F 1051 .Q26 1940-1941

If you find a genealogy listed in one of those catalogs, go to the inter-library loan section of your public library and ask the librarian to help you find out what libraries have the genealogy you are interested in. Most libraries will not lend genealogies. But if you do find out which library has the book you are interested in, you can write to that library and see if they will check the book for the name of the earliest ancestor you have identified. You may be able to save a lot of time if the research has already been done.

However, if you find "your" genealogy, do not assume that the information is correct. When you make such a find, you have several choices: 1. Accept the information as given. 2. Verify the data found. (Check sources to confirm or disprove information presented.) 3. Begin or continue research on other lines that have not been completed. 4. Choose a pair of your great-grandparents, and begin tracing all of their descendants. 5. Decide that you have found all of the information you need, and begin a new hobby. We hope that you will make your choice in groups 2 through 4.

If you do not find that someone else has already done your genealogy, it means that you will have the opportunity to be a trailblazer. Work carefully, and record sources of information. It is not uncommon to find one date of death in an obituary, another date on the death certificate, and another different date on the gravestone. You need to know where you got your information, in order to determine the reliability of the data.

Research prior to 1900 is similar to research that we have been discussing. Laws requiring birth and death records vary from state to state. Some states began keeping those records very early. Some states did not begin birth and death records until about 1900 itself. The earliest birth and death records are usually in the county courthouse. In New England, those records are generally town records, rather than county records. Marriage records are among the earliest records that were kept by counties.

Tracing your ancestors in Quebec can be much easier than United States research, since parish registers have been kept from 1621 to the present. Parish registers contain baptisms, marriages and burials. The registers are quite complete, with few gaps. The records are being microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, and many records are available at the (Mormon) Branch Libraries.

Since the Catholic Church filled the role of vital records keeper in Quebec, copies of parish registers were filed yearly in the archives of the judicial district in which the parish is located. Parish registers prior to 1876 have been sent to the regional branches of the Archives National du Quebec. The Genealogical Society of Utah also has copies of those early church records.

Our greatest difficulty in French-Canadian research is usually encountered for the first time when the French-Canadians moved from Quebec and pioneered in the United States. Since they were pioneers, record-keeping procedures were not well developed in the areas where they lived. Many pioneers moved on to new areas as the place they had settled became too crowded to suit them. So they were always moving before the records were kept. But most of them were Catholics. Information about them may be located in records of the bishops of Quebec and Iowa, and other bishops and missionaries who traveled hundreds of miles to bring the sacraments to their people on the frontier. But for some people, the records simply do not exist.

Marriage records are probably the most important single source of information for tracing French-Canadian ancestors. Marriage records in the United States usually give the names of the bride and groom, their counties of residence, the date and place of marriage, and the names of the officiator and the witnesses. French-Canadian marriage records go beyond this information and give also the names of the parents of the bride and the names of the parents of the groom. If all the marriages are in the index you are consulting, you can trace the entire family back to the immigrant ancestors, in that one source. Naturally, we are interested in more information than just what is on the marriage record. But marriage records provide the basics for a "bare bones genealogy."

Father Loiselle's index includes cards indexing about 800,000 marriages in Quebec. Since there is one card for the bride and one card for the groom, there are about 1,600,000 cards in the entire index. This index is on microfilm, and is available on loan at the (Mormon) Branch Genealogical Libraries.

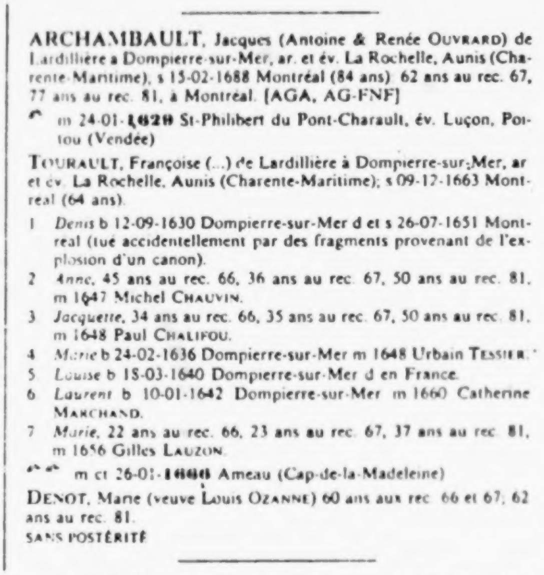
Father Rivest's index is particularly valuable for the Ottawa River region. The index covers the period 1630 to 1970. There is, however, only one card for each marriage, alphabetical under the name of the bride. This kind of indexing provides little difficulty, however, since each card gives the names of the bride's mother and father, as well as the groom's mother and father. This index is also available on loan at the (Mormon) Branch Genealogical Libraries.

Many individual parishes, cities, and even marriage records for whole counties are being abstracted and published. French Canadian research groups and libraries specializing in French-Canadian research have many of these publications.

When you have traced your ancestry back to about 1760, research becomes much easier. Father Tanguay compiled a seven-volume genealogical dictionary of French Canadians. His research was not confined to Quebec. He travelled to other provinces, and to the United States gathering and compiling records. Although Father Tanguay's work has been harshly criticized by some researchers, it was the first work that was intended to be comprehensive. And most of the information is correct. Researchers can use Tanguay as a guide for their research in the period from about 1620 to 1760. But if conflicts are found between Tanguay and another source, remember that all works may contain errors. There is a three-volume set of corrections to Tanguay's work, edited by J. Arthur Leboeuf. Always remember that these compilations are guides – they are not original records. And you should check carefully to see if the author's conclusions are correct, in view of the records you are able to access.

Some modern sources are more accurate than Tanguay's work, since additional records and techniques are available, and more time has elapsed in which to compile the records. Perhaps most recent is Jette's work. In form it is somewhat like Tanguay. Volume 1 covers the period from 1620 to 1730.

Another major marriage index for the French period was compiled by the Institut Drouin of Montreal, *Dictionnaire national des Canadiens français (1608-1760)*. Volumes 1 and 2 are extracts from marriage records, alphabetical by name of groom. Volume 3 contains biographies in French.



**ARCHAMBAULT**, Jacques (Antoine & Renée OUVRARD) de Lardillière a Dompierre-sur-Mer, ar. et év. La Rochelle, Aunis (Charente-Maritime), s 15-02-1688 Montréal (84 ans) 62 ans au rec. 67, 77 ans au rec. 81, à Montreal. [AGA, AG-FNF]

m 24-01-**1628** St-Philibert du Pont-Charault, év. Luçon, Poitou (Vendée)

TOURAULT, Françoise (...) de Lardillière à Dompierre-sur-Mer, ar et év. La Rochelle, Aunis (Charente-Maritime); s 09-12-1663 Montreal (64 ans).

1 *Denis* b 12-09-1630 Dompierre-sur-Mer d et s 26-07-1651 Montreal (tué accidentellement par des fragments provenant de l'explosion d'un canon).
2 *Anne*, 45 ans au rec. 66, 36 ans au rec. 67, 50 ans au rec. 81, m 1647 Michel CHAUVIN.
3 *Jacquette*, 34 ans au rec. 66, 35 ans au rec. 67, 50 ans au rec. 81, m 1648 Paul CHALIFOU.
4 *Marie* b 24-02-1636 Dompierre-sur-Mer m 1648 Urbain TESSIER.
5 *Louise* b 15-03-1640 Dompierre-sur-Mer d en France.
6 *Laurent* b 10-01-1642 Dompierre-sur-Mer m 1660 Catherine MARCHAND.
7 *Marie*, 22 ans au rec. 66, 23 ans au rec. 67, 37 ans au rec. 81, m 1656 Gilles LAUZON.

m ct 26-01-**1666** Ameau (Cap-de-la-Madeleine)

DENOT, Marie (veuve Louis OZANNE) 60 ans aux rec. 66 et 67, 62 ans au rec. 81.
SANS POSTÉRITÉ

*Example (slightly enlarged) from Tanguay's* Dictionnaire Généalogique des Familles Canadiennes, *vol.* 5.

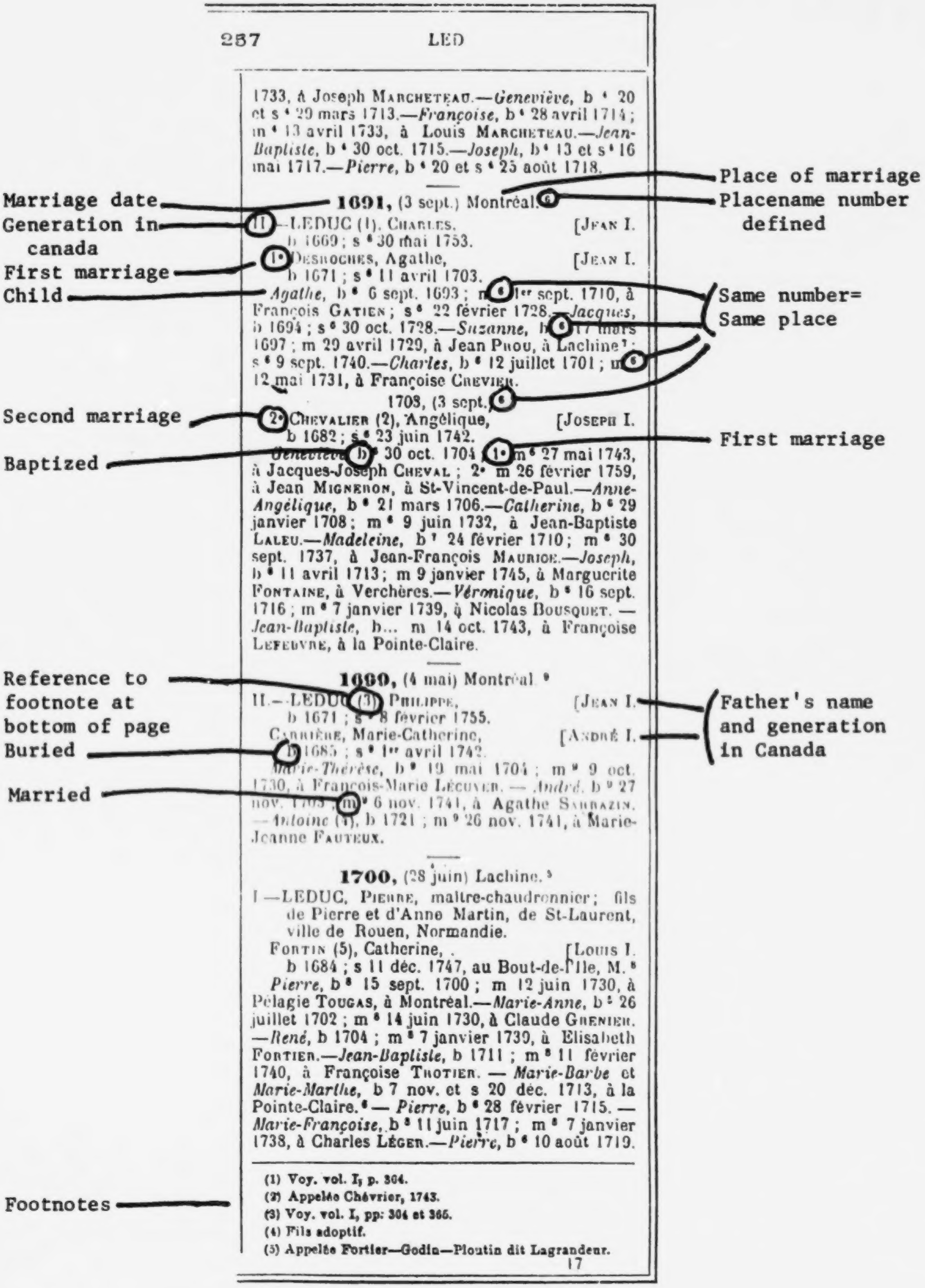
The most exhaustive modern source is the compilation of birth, marriage, death and census information computerized by the University of Montreal. Twenty-two volumes take that work to 1749. The entire project will cover the period 1620 to 1850. The compilation is a little difficult to use. But the information is there. The series title is *Repertoire des actes de baptême, mariage, sépulture et des recensements du Québec ancien*.

Census records are particularly valuable for showing entire families. But remember, some children may have died or not be living at home. And, not everyone in a household may be related. See *Lost in Canada*, v. 1, p. 61-62, for an article on Canadian censuses. Several early Quebec censuses are published in: *Histoire des canadiens-français, 1608-1880*, by Benjamin Sulte, published 1882-1884. 8 vol. in 4. F 1027 f.S9 The following censuses are included: 1639-40, v. 2, p. 91-92; 1666, v. 4, p. 52-63; 1667, v. 4, p. 64-78; 1681, v. 5, p. 53-88.

1666: "Le premier recensement de la Nouvelle-France." In: Quebec (Province). Archives. *Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Quebec pour 1935-36*. p. 1-154. F 1051 .Q26 1935/36

1667: "Le recensement de 1667." In: *Memoires de la Societe genealogique canadienne-française*, v. 18, no. 1/2 (Jan/Apr 1967), p. 1-116. CS 80 .S62 v. 18

Some of the early censuses include only the name of the head of the household.


Marriage date
Generation in canada
First marriage
Child
Second marriage
Baptized
Reference to footnote at bottom of page
Buried
Married
Footnotes
Place of marriage
Placename number defined
Same number= Same place
First marriage
Father's name and generation in Canada

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1733, à Joseph MARCHETEAU.—*Geneviève*, b $^{6}$ 20 et s $^{6}$ 29 mars 1713.—*Françoise*, b $^{6}$ 28 avril 1714; m $^{6}$ 13 avril 1733, à Louis MARCHETEAU.—*Jean-Baptiste*, b $^{6}$ 30 oct. 1715.—*Joseph*, b $^{6}$ 13 et s $^{6}$ 16 mai 1717.—*Pierre*, b $^{6}$ 20 et s $^{6}$ 25 août 1718.

**1691,** (3 sept.) Montréal.$^{6}$

II—LEDUC (1), CHARLES, [JEAN I.
b 1669; s $^{6}$ 30 mai 1753.

1° DESROCHES, Agathe, [JEAN I.
b 1671; s $^{6}$ 11 avril 1703.

*Agathe*, b $^{6}$ 6 sept. 1693; m $^{6}$ 1er sept. 1710, à François GATIEN; s $^{6}$ 22 février 1728.—*Jacques*, b 1694; s $^{6}$ 30 oct. 1728.—*Suzanne*, b $^{6}$ 17 mars 1697; m 29 avril 1729, à Jean PROU, à Lachine $^{7}$; s $^{6}$ 9 sept. 1740.—*Charles*, b $^{6}$ 12 juillet 1701; m $^{6}$ 12 mai 1731, à Françoise CHEVIER.

1708, (3 sept.) $^{6}$

2° CHEVALIER (2), Angélique, [JOSEPH I.
b 1682; s $^{6}$ 23 juin 1742.

*Geneviève*, b $^{6}$ 30 oct. 1704; 1° m $^{6}$ 27 mai 1743, à Jacques-Joseph CHEVAL; 2° m 26 février 1759, à Jean MIGNERON, à St-Vincent-de-Paul.—*Anne-Angélique*, b $^{6}$ 21 mars 1706.—*Catherine*, b $^{6}$ 29 janvier 1708; m $^{6}$ 9 juin 1732, à Jean-Baptiste LALEU.—*Madeleine*, b $^{7}$ 24 février 1710; m $^{6}$ 30 sept. 1737, à Jean-François MAURICE.—*Joseph*, b $^{6}$ 11 avril 1713; m 9 janvier 1745, à Marguerite FONTAINE, à Verchères.—*Véronique*, b $^{6}$ 16 sept. 1716; m $^{6}$ 7 janvier 1739, à Nicolas BOUSQUET.—*Jean-Baptiste*, b... m 14 oct. 1743, à Françoise LEFEBVRE, à la Pointe-Claire.

**1699,** (4 mai) Montréal.$^{6}$

II.—LEDUC (3), PHILIPPE, [JEAN I.
b 1671; s $^{6}$ 8 février 1755.

CARRIÈRE, Marie-Catherine, [ANDRÉ I.
b 1685; s $^{6}$ 1er avril 1742.

*Marie-Thérèse*, b $^{6}$ 19 mai 1704; m $^{6}$ 9 oct. 1730, à François-Marie LÉCUYER.—*André*, b $^{6}$ 27 nov. 1705; m $^{6}$ 6 nov. 1741, à Agathe SARRAZIN.—*Antoine* (4), b 1721; m $^{6}$ 26 nov. 1741, à Marie-Jeanne FAUTEUX.

**1700,** (28 juin) Lachine.$^{5}$

I—LEDUC, PIERRE, maître-chaudronnier; fils de Pierre et d'Anne Martin, de St-Laurent, ville de Rouen, Normandie.

FORTIN (5), Catherine, [LOUIS I.
b 1684; s 11 déc. 1747, au Bout-de-l'Ile, M.$^{8}$

*Pierre*, b $^{8}$ 15 sept. 1700; m 12 juin 1730, à Pélagie TOUGAS, à Montréal.—*Marie-Anne*, b $^{5}$ 26 juillet 1702; m $^{8}$ 14 juin 1730, à Claude GRENIER.—*René*, b 1704; m $^{8}$ 7 janvier 1739, à Elisabeth FORTIER.—*Jean-Baptiste*, b 1711; m $^{8}$ 11 février 1740, à Françoise TROTIER.—*Marie-Barbe* et *Marie-Marthe*, b 7 nov. et s 20 déc. 1713, à la Pointe-Claire.$^{6}$—*Pierre*, b $^{6}$ 28 février 1715.—*Marie-Françoise*, b $^{8}$ 11 juin 1717; m $^{8}$ 7 janvier 1738, à Charles LÉGER.—*Pierre*, b $^{6}$ 10 août 1719.

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(1) Voy. vol. I, p. 304.
(2) Appelée Chévrier, 1743.
(3) Voy. vol. I, pp: 304 et 365.
(4) Fils adoptif.
(5) Appelée Fortier—Godin—Ploutin dit Lagrandeur.

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*Examples from Rene Jette's* Dictionnaire genealogique des familles du Quebec. *This one volume compilation covers the period from about 1620 to 1730.*

Later Quebec censuses: 1825, 1831, 1842, 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881 are available on interlibrary loan from the Public Archives of Canada, and at the (Mormon) Branch Genealogical Libraries.

Notarial records are a new kind of record for most United States researchers. Nearly any kind of transaction or official act had to be notarized: Marriages, some wills, contracts of all kinds, land grants, indenture, donations (gifts to avoid probate), inventories after death, etc. The records are filed in the archives of the judicial district served by the notary. Some of the indexes are printed, and some records are printed. For example, *Index des actes notaries du regime française a Trois-Rivieres, 1634-1760,* by Jules Martel, published 1974, 875 p. This volume indexes notaries' records on deposit in the judicial archives at Three Rivers, Quebec, for the period 1634-1760. This is an extremely important index for anyone doing research in the Three Rivers region. F 1054.5 .T8 M36

Land records may be found in various locations: Petitions are at the Public Archives of Canada, 1764-1842. Quebec land grants are at the Quebec Provincial Archives, Government Building, Quebec City, and cover the period 1626 to the present. Some land records are kept at the county courthouses.

Many people are reluctant to begin research in a non-English language. Actually, many French words are similar to English. And, the basic genealogical vocabulary consists of just a few words, like: father, mother, born, baptized, married, died, buried, etc. Many of us speak or read only the French that we have learned doing genealogy. But if you want to learn French, there are adult education courses, and record and book sets at libraries that are designed to help people learn another language.

There are far more sources of French-Canadian research sources than is possible to cover in a paper of this size. But there are many bibliographies of sources, and many books and articles on French-Canadian research. The French-Canadians have probably the best archives in the world.

One of the things that makes French-Canadian research so much fun is that nearly all French-Candians are traceably related. French-Canadian genealogical gatherings are warm and friendly, because we are all cousins. One of the main activities at meetings is to find out how you are related to other researchers. And you may find that one researcher has done much of one line, another researcher has done another line. We are all related, but there are about 6,000 lines to trace back to the immigrants to New France.

Wiley Roger Pope, born 10 October 1941 at Cut Bank, Glacier Co., Montana, son of Lloyd Theodore Pope and his wife, Oris (Powell) Pope. Grew up in Vernal, Uintah County, Utah. Attended Naples Elementary School, Uintah Junior High School, Ashley Valley Junior High School and Uintah High School. Won "Best Actor" award in Utah Class B High School Drama Festival, while a junior. High school class emphasis was on mathematics and science. Graduated from Uintah High School, 1959.

Attended Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1959-1960, 1963-1968. Received BA with a German major and English minor, 1966; and MLS in 1968. Worked as Documents and Maps Librarian, 1968, and Assistant Reference Librarian, 1968-69, at Brigham Young University Library; Reference and Catalog Librarian at a government library in Washington, D.C., 1969-1970; Catalog Librarian at the University of Minnesota Wilson Library, 1970-1972; Catalog Librarian, 1972-1977, Reference Librarian, 1977-present, at the Minnesota Historical Society Library.

Served a mission for the LDS church in Norway, 1959-1963. Has had numerous church positions in music and genealogy. Cubmaster, 1980-present.

Married to Juanita Fay Jones of Lehi, Utah County, Utah. Eight children: Winona, Wendolyn, Willow, Robert, Wanda, Ronald, Rebecca and Roger.

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Joint editor of Checklist of French-Canadian Genealogical Works at the Minnesota Historical Society Library. Review editor, *Minnesota Genealogist*, 1974-1980; Editor: *Minnesota Genealogist*, 1974; Editor: *MGS Newsletter*, 1974; Editor: *The Pope Family Register*, 1975-1979, 1981; Editor: *The Pope Family Archives*, 1980.

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Publications in progress: History of St. John's Episcopal Church, Morristown, Minnesota; History of Robert Mattock Pope and His Family; The Minnesota Cemetery Index: An Every-Name Index to Printed Minnesota Cemetery Inscriptions, Obituaries, Burials, Etc.; Minnesota Cemetery Locations; Checklist of United States Government Documents of Importance to Genealogists, plus several more volumes of Tracing Your Ancestors in Minnesota.

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# Les Voyageurs: A French Language Village Experience

by Christine Schulze

## Introduction

Since 1961, the International Language Villages has promoted experience-based learning for the teaching of foreign language to young people. The learner is immersed in the culture and surrounded by the language in an environment designed to encourage functional fluency. This philosophy has served as the basis for developing summer language villages, mini-programs, abroad programs and adventure programs.

The first adventure program sponsored by the International Language Villages was "Die Wandertour," a bicycling trip through the German-speaking regions of Minnesota in the summer of 1978. Its purpose was to incorporate the teaching of German into an experiential learning program. Not only did the participants benefit from the acquisition of two skills, German and cycling, but they also were exposed to the ethnic heritage of the state.

In the summer of 1979 the next adventure program was initiated. It was designed to explore the French heritage of the state of Minnesota by following the trek of the French Canadian canoemen, "les Voyageurs," along the northern waterways of the BWCA (Boundary Waters Canoe Area). This time the skills of French and canoeing were combined in order to provide the participants with a deeper understanding of the early history of the state.

At that time I was the teaching intern in the Department of French of Concordia College and a staff counselor at Lac du Bois, the French Language Village. Upon accepting the position as the leader of the first French adventure program, I was presented with the challenge of creating a curriculum which would address all the desired learner outcomes: outdoor and canoeing skills, functional fluency in French and knowledge of the life and customs of the Voyageurs. Although I discovered the existence of other present-day adventure programs or expeditions which had followed the canoe routes of the Voyageurs, I did not find a French language program which attempted to achieve the same objective. The concept of a language adventure program is a novel educational experience as it combines two educational theories: experiential learning and the cultural immersion model for the teaching of foreign language.

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My research for the curriculum guide proved to be an extensive project. The writings of the noted Voyageur historian, Grace Lee Nute, were the most valuable in designing a complete picture of the Voyageur's life style. The Minnesota Historical Society also provided many useful pamphlets and song books. In the month of February I attended the *Festival du Voyageur* in Saint Boniface, a French-speaking suburb of Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada, which was a good source of ideas for completing the final touches on the curriculum.

## Physical Description of the Trip

During the summer of 1979, the French Voyageur Canoeing program was offered from July 23 to August 4. Sixteen young people, aged

13-18 years, participated in the program. We were limited to 16 as a BWCA regulation is ten persons on an individual campsite. Therefore, we split into two groups of ten: eight participants, one guide and one language village staff member. In addition to myself as the program leader, the program assistant was Marie-Claude Fournier, a French native speaker from Rennes, Bretagne.

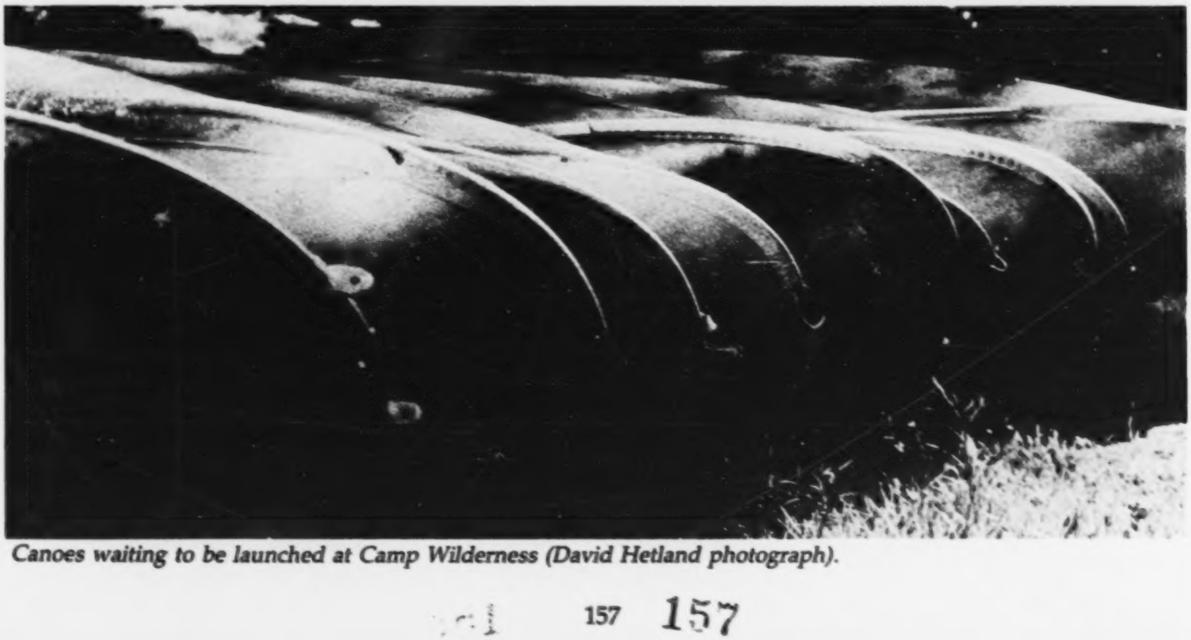
The itinerary was as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Arrival at Camp Wilderness Canoe Base on Seagull Lake, located at the tip of the Gunflint Trail in the BWCA, northern Minnesota |
| Day 2 | Orientation on site<br>– canoeing and camping skills<br>– French language instruction and cultural introduction to the *voyageurs* |
| Days 3 & 4 | Pack out for two days with two 25′ North Canoes (350 lbs.) |
| Days 5-10 | Pack out for six days with eight 17′ canoes |
| Day 11 | Visit to Old Fort William in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada |
| Day 12 | Debriefing at Camp Wilderness Canoe Base |
| Day 13 | Departure |

Instead of arranging all of our own logistics, we used Camp Wilderness Canoe Base as our outfitters. They supplied the canoes, Duluth packs, tents, camping equipment and the dehydrated food stuffs. Moreover, we utilized their facilities as our base camp for the orientation and debriefing sessions. Two of their guides also accompanied our group to ensure a successful navigation of the area.

The itinerary was designed to afford the participants a variety of experiences, as opposed to simply logging miles for a physical endurance test. The *voyageurs* had traditionally used the 25′ North Canoes to transport their furs. Since there are not many North Canoes left in existence, it was fortunate that they were available at Camp Wilderness Canoe Base. A North Canoe holds ten people, and two of them easily accommodated our group. However, only two days were allotted for the North Canoes as the

*These two boys are practicing* du canoë *at Lac du Bois (David Hetland photograph).*



*Canoes waiting to be launched at Camp Wilderness (David Hetland photograph).*

participants were too young to negotiate their weight effectively while portaging. After a circle tour of Seagull Lake we exchanged the North Canoes for 17′ canoes back at the canoe base.

The following six days were spent out on the trail and our destination point was North Lake. We canoed through Seagull Lake, Saganaga Lake, Gunflint Lake and the many interlocking streams for a total of over 120 miles and at least a dozen portages. At one point we traversed the Canadian border (by mistake of the guides, actually) and navigated through some unfamiliar territory. Due to a skillful reading of the compass, we emerged into Gunflint Lake on schedule.

The final leg of the trip was hiking the original Grand Portage trail. It winds through the woods for 13.6 kilometers from the former site of Fort Charlotte on the Pigeon River to the reconstructed North West Company Stockade on Lake Superior. Although the *voyageurs* carried their packs and canoes the length of the trail, we did not simulate that particular hardship and left our gear at a nearby campsite.

The culminating experience of the program was a visit to Old Fort William the following day. It is a "living museum" where the fur trading past is vividly recalled. The fort has been entirely reconstructed and is "inhabited" by typical personages of that era (*voyageurs*, Indians and fur company employees) to present

*Hiking the Grand Portage trail (David Hetland photograph).*

*French villagers dressed in* tuques *and* ceintures fléchées *scout their next passage (David Hetland photograph).*

the skills, festivities and everyday life of ordinary people in the fur trade society 160 years ago.

## Purpose and Program Goals

The purpose of the International Language Villages travel adventure program in the Quetico-Superior canoe country was to teach the French language in the context of a cultural simulation of the life of the *voyageurs,* French-Canadian canoemen of the North American fur trade. The specific goals of the two-week program were as follows:

1) By engaging in the outdoor activities of canoeing and camping in the "untouched" region of the BWCA, the participant will simulate the life of a French *voyageur* in the wilderness setting that existed in the 18th century.

2) Through active participation in role-playing activities and skits, the participant will be exposed to the customs and history of the *voyageurs.*

3) All daily activities will be conducted in French with specific phrases to be mastered each day by the participant.

4) Since music was important to *voyageur* culture, at least one new song will be taught each day.

5) Each evening an activity of singing, dancing, games, etc., will further enhance the participant's knowledge of the French *voyageur.*

The primary goal was the simulation of the *voyageur* life-style by developing a cultural context in which all learning took place. By virtue of the fact that we were in the pristine lake country of the BWCA, our steps into the past were easily facilitated. Modern conveniences did not need to be eliminated because none existed – with the small exception of marked campsites on the map.

Against the wilderness backdrop of the BWCA, *les voyageurs* sprang to life. We donned new identities of *voyageur* fame such as Daniel (Du Lhut), Jean (Nicolet), etc. In addition to sporting a French-Canadian name (carved on a birchbark name tag for easy identification), each participant was given a *tuque* (tassled hat) and a *ceinture fléchée* (fringed scarf), which were the traditional garb of the *voyageurs.* They were worn from sunrise to sunset, in rain or shine. A glance from afar at the brightly-colored red hats skimming the horizon could only make one wonder if the *voyageurs* were once again transporting furs by canoe.

Another cultural component which fit well into the structure of the trip was the division of the participants into two *brigades,* the term used for the groups of *voyageur* canoes traveling together. Although we canoed our daily route together, each brigade was a self-sufficient group in and of itself as to setting up camp, cooking meals and performing daily chores. Since the *voyageurs* were known for their boasts of physical prowess, a healthy spirit of competition was fostered between the two *brigades* – who left camp earliest, who spoke French the most, etc. The first two days in the North Canoes readily established this group identity.

The *brigade* not only served as a natural division of the group but also as another cultural learning tool. In keeping with *voyageur* tradition each *brigade* had a *chanteur* who led the songs each day. Another member of the *brigade* was the *bourgeois,* who was the official representative of the fur trading company by whom the canoemen were employed. The *bourgeois* was given special treatment: all meals were prepared for him and he never paddled, of course. The participants would take turns at assuming the various roles, with the *bourgeois* being a highly favored position.

The cultural gloss of the *voyageur* dress and customs was certainly a new dimension to a traditional outdoor canoe program. However, the everyday routine of setting up and breaking camp, cooking meals on an open fire, paddling and portaging canoes and packs were the skills which truly emphasized outdoor survival in the wilderness. Just as the *voyageurs* had to contend with a bear on the outskirts of the campsite or a one-mile portgage uphill, so did we, too. Most of the participants had never been in such a rustic setting for a comparable amount of time and the outdoor skills were difficult and challenging. Therefore, the hardships of the *voyageur* life-style were felt in a pseudo-realistic fashion by everyone.

Active participation in skits brought to life the historic events of the 18th century, and further explored the customs of the *voyageur.* Every evening, each brigade was responsible for reenacting a memorable *voyageur* tale or reliving an event in history. We met the famous explorers, Samuel de Champlain and *Pere* Louis Hennepin, "fought" the Seven Years War between France and England, and listened to the folklore of the Chippewa, who inhabited the territory of Minnesota.

*French staff members reenact an historical event (David Hetland photograph).*

A favorite tale was the recipe of Peter Jacobs for a *voyageur* meal of *rubbaboo*:

– After making a good blazing fire, put two quarts of lake water in the *chaudière* (kettle). In a two-quart dish full of water add some *farine* (flour) and stir it until it looks like mush. When the water in the *chaudière* is boiling, add the flour mixture, where it becomes thinner. Then take a stick and stir until boiling point. Faithfully stir the flour-soup so as to prevent it from sticking and burning on the bottom. When the flour-soup is quite cooked, remove the *chaudière* from the *feu de bois* (fire). While the soup is boiling hot, cut (hatchet or tomahawk) a pound of pemmican to pieces and throw them into the kettle. Less than half an hour cooking time.

Forming a circle around the *chaudière*, the *voyageurs* would speedily empty it with their *cuillères en bois*. Or if in a great hurry, they would pour out their *rubbaboo* on the smooth hollow rocks, where it became cooler in a shorter time, and eat it – licking it up with their tongues.

*Practicing the use of the compass.* Nord, sud, est, ouest*? (David Hetland photograph).*

As dictated by *voyageur* custom, all of the participants underwent a typical initiation ceremony at the halfway point of the trip as they graduated into the ranks of the *Hommes du Nord* (men of the North). All new *voyageurs* were baptized by their experienced compatriots with a cedar branch dipped in water, and then recited the following oath: "I promise never to allow a newcomer to pass without a similar experience and never to kiss a *voyageur*'s wife without her consent." We devised a similar oath to keep with tradition. Some unfortunate *voyageurs* were baptized by being thrown into the lake – which also happened to some unfortunate participants in our program.

The third goal of integrating the French language into all activities was accomplished through a set of specific phrases and vocabulary which were pertinent to daily life in the wilderness. Given the overall philosophy of the International Language Villages of developing functional oral proficiency, the bulk of the language learning took place in the midst of teaching canoeing and camping skills. All aspects of canoeing from terms to technique were taught in French. Therefore, it was simply natural for the participant to refer to different strokes or canoe positions in French throughout the program. Map and compass reading were also done in French. In fact, most of the lakes and portages in the BWCA originally had French names. Weather was always a primary concern and "il fait du soleil" (it's sunny) or "il pleut" (it's raining) had great meaning!

In order to contribute to the morale of the *voyageurs, les chansons a l'aviron* (paddling songs) always set the rhythm by which they dipped their paddles in unison. So, too, did the *voyageur* songs contribute to the morale of our *brigades* as many days included 12 hours of paddling. Music is also an excellent medium by which to teach language. Many of the songs had over ten verses and a new verse would be added each day as a benchmark in the language acquisition process. At the end of the two-week program, the participants were familiar with at least 20-25 songs. One of the favorites was perhaps the most well-known *voyageur* song:

"En Roulant Ma Boule."

Refrain: *En roulant ma boule roulant,*
*En roulant ma boule.*
*En roulant ma boule roulant,*
*En roulant ma boule.*

1. *Derrière chez nous y-a-t'un étang,*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*Trois beaux canards s'en vont baignant,*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
2. *Trois beaux canards s'en vont baignant,*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*Le fils du roi s'en va chassant,*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
3. *Le fils du roi s'en va chassant,*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*Avec son grand fusil d'argent*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
4. *Avec son grand fusil d'argent*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*Visa le noir, tua le blanc,*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
5. *Visa le noir, tua le blanc,*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*O fils du roi, tu es mechant,*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
6. *O fils du roi, tu es méchant,*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*D'avoir tué mon canard blanc,*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
7. *D'avoir tué mon canard blanc,*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*Par dessous l'aile il perd son sang*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
8. *Par dessous l'aile il perd son sang*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*Et toutes ses plumes s'en vont au vent,*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
9. *Et toutes ses plumes s'en vont au vent*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*Trois dames s'en vont les ramassant,*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
10. *Trois dames s'en vont les ramassant,*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*C'est pour en faire un lit de camp*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain
11. *C'est pour en faire un lit de camp,*
*En roulant ma boule,*
*Pour y coucher tous les passants,*
*Rouli-roulant, ma boule roulant*
Refrain

Finally, the evenings consisted of activities around the camp fire, which were hosted by one of the *brigades*. Songs, dances, storytelling and games were instrumental in unwinding from a long day of canoeing and were akin to the activity of the *voyageurs* while out on the trail. The group spirit was definitely unified by the cozy feeling which always is generated by sitting around a camp fire.

## Learner Outcomes

The learner outcomes are divided into three categories: outdoor survival, cultural awareness and language acquisition.

As is evidenced by most outdoor adventure programs, the sheer fact of accomplishing a set goal to test one's endurance accounts for a tremendous amount of personal growth. Although the participants had varying degrees of camping and canoeing experience, not one of the students had been in a similar wilderness setting for as long a period of time nor canoed an equal number of miles. Having now successfully reached the destination of our designated route, all the participants proved to themselves that they were fully capable of surviving in the wilderness.

Another significant learner outcome was the change in perception from the success of the individual to the success of the group. As all of the group members pull together, the group will in turn be a source of strength for all the individuals. Most teenagers have not been exposed to this sort of challenge, and consequently are unfamiliar with the personal responsibilities which are required to maintain a healthy group spirit. At first, I, as the leader, was the impetus to cook all the meals, set up camp, and solve all the problems. As the trip progressed, the participants took more and more individual initiative to perform the above tasks. By the end of the trip they had become almost self-sufficient, to the extent of recognizing the efforts involved in successfully completing a canoeing and camping expedition.

In terms of measuring the degree of the participants' awareness of the *voyageur* culture, the group visit to Old Fort William was the best testing tool which could have been administered. The Fort is living proof of all the customs of the *voyageurs* and therefore is a realistic measure of the customs which we had practiced in the wilderness.

The students encountered scene after scene of typical *voyageur* activities conducted by costumed Fort William employees. They were astounded by how much they understood and in many cases how their knowledge surpassed that of the presenters. They asked difficult questions, very confident of their ability to judge the responses. In other words, Old Fort William reconfirmed the learning process in the minds of the participants who proudly wore their *tuques* and *ceintures fléchées* throughout the visit. In fact, they were often mistaken for Fort William employees and didn't hesitate to assume an active role in the schedule of events.

*Singing* En Roulant Ma Boule Roulant *around a campfire (David Hetland photograph).*

Finally, the language acquisition element was significant. The daily phrases had become rote in French, as the activities or tasks to which they were linked were performed on a consistent basis. On the average, the participants were familiar with over two dozen songs. The native assistant and I primarily used French with the participants all day long. Given the nature of the program, some safety considerations were reiterated in English at the beginning to ensure comprehension of vital terms. However, in moments of conceivable panic the students more often than not relied on their new vocabulary. For example, in the case of a floating log in the path of a rapidly approaching canoe, the students always shouted *corps mort* (dead body), which was the phrase used by the *voyageurs*. Since the expression was taught without any reference to an English equivalent, the participants had easily processed it into their active vocabulary.

Old Fort William also proved to be a test of the students' French skills. Many of the costumed actors were French-speaking and readily encouraged their use of the language. For those actors who were not conversant in French, the participants insisted on speaking only French and gave them a run for their money, shall we say. Quite frankly, the Old Fort William staff was rather happy to see us depart: I don't think they had ever encountered a similar group touring their facility.

All in all, the French Voyageur Canoeing program proved to be a challenging and rewarding experience for the entire group of 16 young people. Each participant had his or her limits stretched, in terms of an outdoor survival test in a cultural linguistic immersion setting. A certain amount of personal stress exists in either one of those situations, so the combination of the two produced a teacher/learner relationship unique to outdoor and foreign language education.

## Interplay of Two Educational Theories

The educational theories which the French Voyageur Canoeing program wove together are:

1) Experiential learning, and
2) Cultural immersion.

Experiential learning has often been described as learning situations which occur outside of a classroom. Therefore, the learner is thought of as being in direct physical contact with the subject being studied, as opposed to a passive learning process of reading or discussing the subject matter. In other words, ". . . experiential learning involves not merely *observing* the phenomenon being studied but also *doing* something with it. . . ." Another dimension to experiential learning is the emotional steps which one takes in processing the information being learned. ". . . Experiential learning means the learning that occurs when changes in judgments, feelings, knowledge, or skills result for a particular person from living through an event or events."

In the context of a wilderness adventure program, the learning process entails a series of meaningful, personal challenges in direct confrontation with an unfamiliar environment. This is balanced by a necessity to interact with a group, which provides the social framework within which self-assertiveness is highly encouraged.

A diagram of an experiential learning program is:

**Participant**
is placed into a
**Unique Physical Environment**
and into a
**Unique Social Environment**
and is then given
**Problem-Solving Tasks: Challenges**
which lead to
**Stress/Anxiety**
which is overcome by
**Mastery/Competency of Skills**
which
**Alters Self-Concept**

One of the critical issues in planning the experiential process is whether or not the learner can make the transfer from one specific set of variables to broader considerations. If the ultimate goal of a program is to alter one's self-concept, then all the activities must be learner-centered and require intrinsic motivation as a mechanism for solving issues which arise.

In addition to the concept of experiential learning, the French Voyageur program took place in a cultural immersion environment which promoted language learning. Communicative competence is a current teaching methodology which stresses that language be taught in culturally appropriate situations as opposed to language use in isolation of such a framework.

One can either study a group of facts and be culturally informed or one can internalize the cultural knowledge through a process which encourages personal interactions. The latter method is the basis of the integrative language/culture learning process devised by Linda Crawford-Lange and Dale Lange. [*] As the language learner actively participates in a culturally-authentic situation, she/he begins to associate personally with the knowledge being gained. The next step is to extrapolate the pertinent cultural facts and personal reactions and apply them to novel cultural situations. By this process students become authors of culture and relieve the teacher of the burden of being the cultural authority.

The French Voyageur canoeing program draws educational theories of experiential learning and cultural immersion together. An outdoor adventure program took place in the context of a cultural/linguistic immersion setting. Applying the experiential learning diagram (shown earlier) to the Voyageur program with its cultural components demonstrates how the educational theories overlap.

*A beautiful way to end the day:* bonne nuit, les voyageurs *(David Hetland photograph).*

The unique physical environment was the BWCA, which highly replicated the 18th century New World of the *voyageurs* and set the stage for the two-week cultural simulation. Given the urban background of the majority of the participants, the untouched lake country was in sharp contrast to their usual surroundings. Therefore, their sensibilities to a new environment, from both a cultural and personal perspective, were highly challenged.

Not only did the *brigades* serve as a unique social environment for group living but also as a cultural identification for the participants. By role-playing and enacting historical sketches, the participants could more readily internalize the customs and life-style of the *voyageurs*. Despite many individual backgrounds, interpersonal communication skills were enhanced by a cultural blanket which covered every aspect of the program . . . from dress to songs to new vocabulary for outdoor skills.

Each day presented problem-solving tasks which involved both outdoor skills and language/cultural activities. For example, the art of cooking *"galettes à la Voyageur"* (bannock bread or fried biscuits) was taught once and in French. So not only was an outdoor skill of cooking over an open fire explained, but there was also exposure to the French vocabulary. since *galettes* had never been previously eaten by any of the participants, it was a novel experience. The challenge became one of varying the composition of the biscuit to make it still edible but more appealing, adding wild blueberries or cinnamon or making it coffee-cake style, etc. The creative resources of the participants were tapped, and new vocabulary accompanied each original creation.

Be it running rapids, portaging packs or navigating to the selected campsite, each day was replete with new outdoor skills for which the participants had a linguistic or cultural reference. Each task required the students to draw on their mental, physical and emotional resources. It is one thing to correctly point your canoe northward; it is another to remember that the direction is *au nord*. Nevertheless, the active involvement with the French vocabulary tremendously reinforced the retention of new words.

Confronted by new people upon whom they had to rely for support in an unfamiliar setting, the participants experienced a significant amount of stress and anxiety. The challenge of outdoor survival forced interaction with all members of the group in order to ensure that everyone would reach the final destination. In addition to testing one's physical limits in the wilderness, the immersion into a new cultural setting was also stress-producing.

Without a doubt, the weather is the biggest factor in determining the mood of a group and how well one handles the physical and mental strain of being far away from the comforts of home. The last full day of canoeing, we encountered a torrential downpour of rain by midmorning. Within minutes we were soaked to the skin. It was raining so hard that we finally pulled ashore and took cover under a cluster of fir trees, with an eventual array of ponchos strung across the branches. Only a wisp of smoke was produced by our attempts to light a fire. On we paddled until the next calamity struck. While negotiating some rapids on foot beside our canoes, one of the canoes tipped and all the packs were completely drenched: the only food remaining became un-dehydrated. The weather also caused our mistaken foray into Canada, as some of the usual signs to guide the way were indistinguishable in the downpour.

Setting up camp in the soggiest of conditions constituted the lowest point of the trip, especially when the next day promised long miles of canoeing to retrace our path along which was located the most difficult portage yet encountered. Exhausted, wet and hungry, we huddled together and suddenly started to laugh and joke about our predicament. A tremendous sense of trust and confidence had developed amongst all the members of the group. We knew that if we stuck together, we would "weather the storm" and find dryer ground farther down the trail.

The element of mastery and competency in the experiential learning scale was proven beyond my greatest expectations. Although I certainly had not pre-ordered the calamitous weather or sequence of events, it was a very valuable educational experience. Confident in their new environment, the participants dealt with the circumstances maturely and knowledgeably and were not prompted by my instructions to perform in the necessary tasks. Tents were set up and sleeping bags counted. All remaining edibles were thrown together in a one-pot stew. Dry wood was found and fires were built, all to the tune of our repertoire of *voyageur* songs. Even in the worst of conditions, we stood our ground as *voyageurs* and knew that we would live to tell our story.

The mastery and competency of the *voyageur* culture and of the French language was also evidenced by our visit to Old Fort William. No longer was I the cultural authority of the *voyageurs* and the fur trading era. In fact, the participants wrote themselves into the script of Old Fort William and thoroughly enjoyed being immersed into another role-playing situation. In essence, they had accumulated all of these cultural facts and tidbits into a cohesive image of what the *voyageur* was like. In turn they successfully applied this knowledge in a novel cultural environment, as represented by the Fort.

Undeniably, the French Voyageur Canoeing program was a catalyst for change in each participant. Their self-concepts were altered by an experience unlike any they had ever had before or (perhaps) would ever have again. The *voyageur* cultural simulation affected their 20th century perceptions of life in America. By undergoing some personal hardships and feeling the weight of responsibility to a group of peers, they increased their awareness of societal interdependence as prompted by a wilderness setting. Their self-confidence and self-esteem were at an all-time high point as them emerged from the BWCA.

## Conclusion

As a language educator I found this to be the most challenging and rewarding program with which I have ever been involved. As the guiding force in an unparalleled learning experience for 16 young people, I felt that my own physical, mental and emotional limits were tested. To be a role model and a teacher in such a demanding set of circumstances requires a good deal of strength of character. However, I discovered that most of the support for me as a leader came from the dynamics of the group. For the first time I was on an equal footing with students, in a situation which required and resulted in trust, cooperation and respect at all levels of interaction.

Although the French Voyageur Canoeing program has not been offered in recent years, we have considered reviving it in the summer of 1988. Nevertheless, the *voyageur* cultural history has been a popular program theme at both the French Language village in the summer and the French miniprograms during the school year. The French history of the state of Minnesota is being passed on to young people as they relive the culture of the *voyageurs* in our French Language Village programs.

Christine Schulze, who is the assistant director of the International Language Villages, received her B.A. in French and history-political science from Concordia College in 1978. She received an academic scholarship which consisted of a work study program in France and a one-year position as a teaching intern in the French department of Concordia College. Christine received her J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1982, which included an international law summer institute in Lyons, France. She served 12 years on the staff of the Language Villages as a staff member and dean of Lac du Bois, the French Language Village, before assuming the role of assistant director. She was also the leader of the French Voyageur canoeing program in 1979 and co-leader of the Swiss Abroad program in 1986. As assistant director, she manages the Twin Cities office and serves as administrator on-site during the summer language programs.

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"The Voyageur" (*Gopher Historian*, Leaflet Series #1)
"Exploration" (*Roots*, developed Spring, 1976)
"Fur Trade" (*Roots*, developed Fall, 1976)

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